Jim Shooter, David Quinn, Stan Woch

ARENA

MAGAZINE

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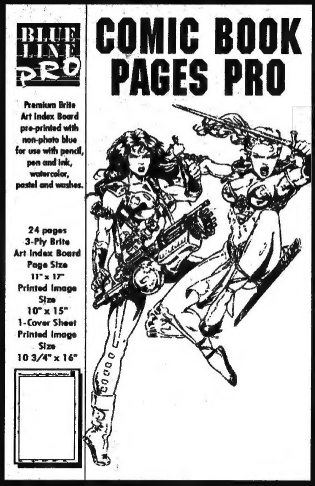
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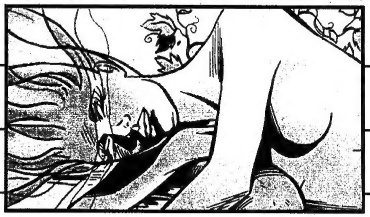

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Editorial

How are you holding this book?

Not exactly what position is it resting in your hands, but how? How did it come to be on your store shelves or on that newstand rack? That's the subject of my editorial this month.

When someone gets a bright idea that they want to do a comic, or a comic-related product (such as *Arena*), then the first thing to be done is called a solicitation. The fun begins. A solicitation is a piece of literature that describes the title, creators, contents, format, price and discount of your product. Once all that's together, with various examples of what you want to do (i.e. copies of your cover and, perhaps, interiors) then you contact the distributors (there's about a dozen) and mail or fax (or do both, which is the best idea because these guys don't always seem to communicate with each other) it to 'em.

Now -- you still with me? -- the distributors take this data and compile their catalogs, which ship about a month after you send your information (and don't always expect your solicitation listing to be verbatim). I'm sure you've seen them; *Advance Comics*, *Previews*, *Comics Scoreboard*, Styx *Up'N'Coming* and there's a few more. With some of these there's an actual consumer edition and retailer edition. The retailers' order directly from these books and place their orders with their particular distributor. They got a month to do this, I think.

It takes the distributors up to a month to compile the orders they've received and send the numbers to the publisher. Once the publisher has these numbers (or purchase orders) then they send their product to press. It's important to have your product ready (or near ready) to go by the time you know how many to ship out because you can't be too sure how long it will take your printer to get your book finished and shipped. This might take a week, it might take eight weeks! Ya' gotta stay on these guys (and get on 'em to give you your originals back, too!)!

The printers ship your finished product to the distributors who then ship it to the retailers. Then, hopefully, you guys buy it (or it goes in the quarter box).

Okay, my major bitch with this whole thing is that the distributors are customarily way understaffed and have way too many people to talk to and way too many pieces of paper to look at and way too many jobs to do. The industry has expanded too rapidly for these poor souls to keep up with it. Information and product changes hands so much that sometimes vital information is lost or transmogrified into something altogether different. The major money-making publishers are given priority handling and the smaller guys get overlooked and stepped on with a flippant apology tossed here and there or just an inexcusable "duh?" or "I'll check into it..." Sometimes it can be very discouraging. This is not to say that most major operations are without their glitches but something must be done... soon. Skipping the distributors and ordering direct seems to be out of the question; there's just too many retailers. What can be done?

I think we need to ask Jim Shooter.

Oh, well... until next time, I remain...

Joe Martin

Thrown To The Lions!

CORRESPONDENCE & ADVICE

Dear *Arena*,

Because I believe your mag to be the most in touch with "behind the scenes" of what's new and "happening" in the comic book industry, I am writing to you with a big question: What's the deal with the Hildebrant's? Are they doing a comic book together? This is wild! I was in ecstatic shock when I heard about this new comic book called *Xenya*, for which they are doing the cover. Do you have any inside scoop on this? I'd appreciate any info you can give me.

Thanks, man!

Paul Kurtz
New Brunswick, NJ

Okay, Paul, here's what I know. Greg Hildebrant is doing covers for DC's ***Spectre*** *for about a year and both Greg and Tim have some things lined up for Marvel such as three posters,* ***Captain America*** *and the* ***Red Skull*** *by Greg and then* ***X-Men 2099*** *by both of them. The brothers Hildebrant are working, also, on an animated film with the unfathomable Stan Lee! When we find out more, you'll know about it.*

Dear *Arena*,

Great mag! I met you guys at a recent store appearance and, well, looks aren't everything. Take heart, chums!

Yours truly,
The Schmooze
Dayton, OH

Thank you, Schmooze, for that enlightening comment.

Dear *Arena* Magazine,

I'm looking forward to the Comicfest up in Philly this year! Are you guys going to have a booth? I'd love to have a chance to chat with Jerry Smith since he and I share a lot of the same views (maybe we could go to the Todd McFarlane/Peter David "debate" and heckle -- just kidding). It looks to be an incredible show, even bigger than San Diego.

Also, I must say the the Marc Silvestri interview was a major surprise, and improvement! Liefeld made the right choice to leave Extreme and I've heard rumors that he's left comics altogether, which is fine by me because personally I can't stand the man. Silvestri, on the other hand, was a very enjoyable read and I've come to regard Joe Martin as one of the best interviewers in the industry -- he seems very personable and on a friendly basis with everybody he talks to. That's a good quality to have when you're interviewing such a diversity of professionals. Anyway, we'll see if Silvestri can really stick to the schedule like he says he will (I hear that the *Ripclaw* miniseries is already behind schedule -- correct me if I'm wrong).

Other improvements: photos (very good!), an enormous amount of news, the *Seeker* preview and Neil Gaiman. I wish Joe Martin all the best with his *Seeker* project. I assume that they are one and the same... other interviews I would suggest are Clive Barker, Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon (*Hellblazer*), Jeff Smith and Alex Ross (that's the guy doing the paintings for *Marvels*, but you knew that). He would make a great interview, I think.

Thanks, guys, and keep up the good work.

With best regards,
Adam Bezold
Charleston, SC

Thanks, Adam, but be careful... last month, Jerry Smith got his ego stroked and now you're stroking mine... very dangerous. We will have some of our staff at Philly but alas, Jerry Smith will not be one of them. Sorry, but search us out. We'd love to meet you!

Thrown to the Lions,

Jim Shooter has done it again! *Warriors of Plasm* is great! It should be mandatory that if you read comics, you read *Warriors of Plasm*... after just two issues, Shooter has me drooling for the next issue. I can't wait until you guys interview him.

Another hit! Malibu has picked a winner! Barry Windsor-Smith has returned in raw form with *Rune*. This will be one of the next hot titles, believe me. You guys must do a Windsor-Smith interview!!! Please? Pretty please?!!

Ah! You've got Frank Miller? Fantastic! *Sin City 2*? I can't wait!!!

Now what you guys need is and update with John Byrne! Grab Art Adams, Walt Simonson, Dave Gibbons... no, wait! What you should do is get all the Legend guys that are going through Dark Horse and let them go wild!!

The heyday of comics are returning, folks! By the way, love the magazine, keep it up!!!

Fanatically yours,
Lee Hobbs
Ann Arbor, MI

ARENA MAGAZINE

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Uh, who was that guy?

Dear Arena,

I just wanted to write and tell you what a wonderful and diverse magazine you have. Too many publications try to push Image crap down your gullet on every other page, and I find few of their comics worth the effort. One positive note on the Image front is Jeff Matsuda. I met him at a recent convention and he was terrific. He sat at his table for hours signing *Brigade* posters and doing quick sketches to all who wanted them (there must have been 500 sketches done!). I stood there and talked to him during his brief down-time and he took his time and drew me a really cool Ripclaw sketch. Extreme Studios may not have their $#!t together, but Matsuda is a class act all the way. Maybe you could do a future feature on him (hint, hint).

Most Sincerely,
Don Carter
Vandalia, OH

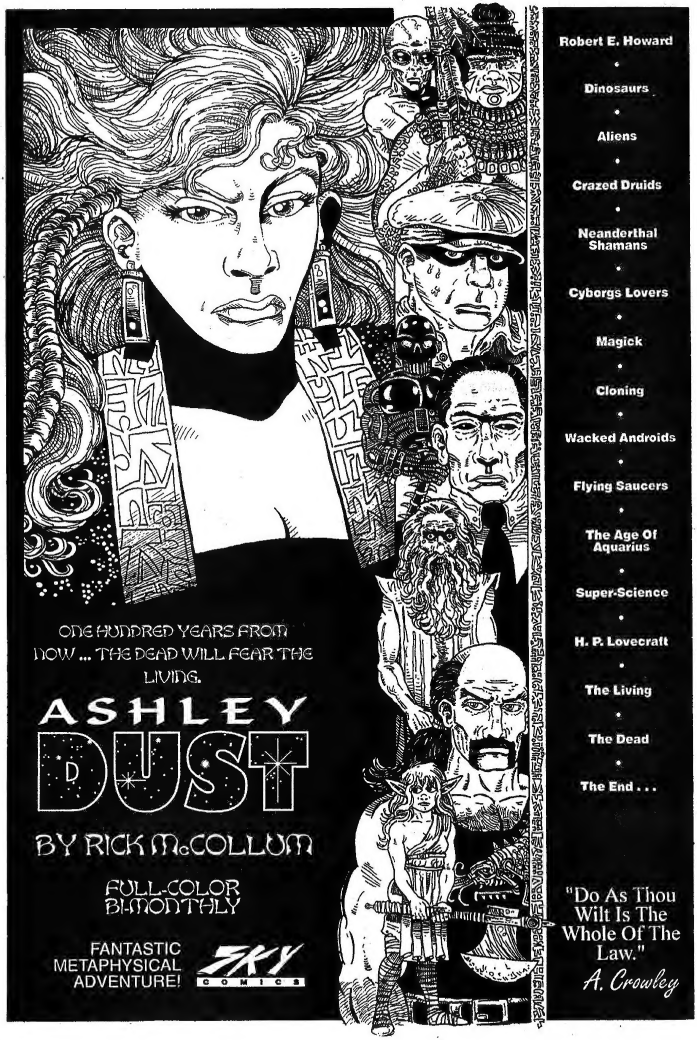
Thanks, Don. We try to be as diverse as possible and I've talked to Matsuda about a feature and he seemed interested. Keep an ear out!

*Upcoming interviews include Erik Larsen and Kelley Jones in **Arena #15**; Frank Miller, John Dennett, Gary Reed and Franchesco in **Arena #16**; Todd McFarlane, Beau Smith and more in **Arena #17**!*

Do ya' love us? Let's hear a big HURRAH!!

NEXT! **Erik Larsen confabulates about the Savage Dragon, Freak Force, Super Patriot, Star, Vanguard, Adam Hughes and more! Also follow the escapades of Kelley Jones and Beau Smith and Brad Gorby! Plus, you'll get all our regular stuff, too.**

Be there, or I'll run naked through the streets...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JIM SHOOTER

HIS NAME IS...

by Joe Martin

Joe Martin: *Can you explain how you actually broke into comics and how you felt when you did?*

Jim Shooter: I had a unique situation actually because I was twelve years old and my family really needed money. We had "the wolves at the door" and my initial motivation was not so much love for comics, although I did, of course. I set out from the word "go" to sell a script. When I sat down to do it, I sat down to do it to sell.

JM: *That's a really amazing line of thinking for a twelve-year-old.*

JS: Well, the way it happened is that I was in a kid's hospital and they had these DC Comics that I had read when I was younger but had kind of gotten out of them a little bit at the time. They also had these new-tangled Marvel Comics, because this was the early sixties, and the Marvels were all ratty and dog-eared. So, I read the DCs first and they were pretty much what I knew they were and then, in desperation, I read a couple of these ratty, dog-eared Marvel Comics, which had been read to death. They were great! It was like the difference was enormous! A little light bulb went on and I thought, "If I could learn to do this like Marvel, then I could sell any story to DC!" So, I actually spent about a year studying Marvel Comics.

JM: *These old Marvel books sort of became like your school textbooks or something.*

JS: Absolutely. I analyzed them and thought about why I liked them and why they seemed to work. It made me think about what I didn't like about the DCs. I actually wanted to send stuff to Marvel -- I had sort of become a Marvel fan -- but I knew I couldn't compete with Stan Lee [chuckles]. So, I picked the DC book that I thought I could do a better job on and it was *Legion of Super-heroes*.

JM: *And you went for it.*

JS: I wrote a story and I kept in mind that in a typical issue (of *Legion of Superheroes*) not a whole lot changed about the characters. You know, in some submissions a guy will write a story and he'll kill off Aunt May or something like that [chuckles] and that's just not a good idea to begin with. I was determined to make it "typical enough" that these guys would buy it and they did. The long version is that

these guys sent me a letter and asked me to send them another one. I sent two. I received a phone call and they said, "We'll buy these three and we want you to write another one." I started with commissioned work like that in the beginning and after that I basically worked as much as I could.

JM: *Weren't they surprised with how young you were when they gave you a call?*

JS: They didn't know at first, maybe they assumed I was a college student or something.

JM: *You must've had a deep voice for a thirteen year old.*

JS: Well, I don't now because I used it up over the years [laughs] but when I was thirteen I guess I sounded bright enough that they assumed I was older. The first time they asked my age was when they asked, "When can you take a business trip to New York? We'll fly you up here and put you up in the Summit Hotel," and I was hesitant about this. Then they said, "How old are you?" When I told them they said, "Put your mom on the phone."

JM: *[Laughs]*

JS: [Laughs] So, on my first business trip my mother had to come with me. But they took care of both of us very well and we went to see the Broadway play of *Superman* and got to go backstage. It was cool.

JM: *So, you became the doughwinner for your family at a young age.*

JS: Yeah, I was, absolutely. I worked my way through high school...

JM: *And fended off the wolves.*

JS: Yeah.

JM: *So, you got* ***Legion of Superheroes*** *and then what?*

JS: I wrote three stories of *Legion* and then I was commissioned for a *Supergirl* story and then *Superman*. It got to the point that I was writing *Legion* every month and occasionally I'd write a *World's Finest* or a *Superman*.

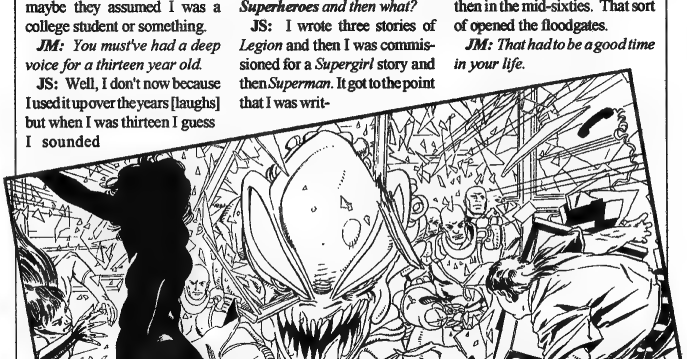
JM: *You were writing a lot of the Super titles at one time.*

JS: Everything Mort Weisenger did except I never wrote a *Lois Lane* for some reason. That one just never came up.

JM: *When you were first hired I wonder how many other submissions yours was going up against.*

JS: You know, actually I think I timed it rather well. This is me being humble but I don't think they got that many at the time I sent mine in. There was that period in comics for about ten years when comics were basically in a steep decline and if you needed talent there was plenty of unemployed guys out there. I sent in my submission just as they were starting to need people. There was a little group of us that came in at that time; there was me and Archie Goodwin and Denny O'Neil and E. Nelson Bridwell... uh, Neal Adams I think came in around then in the mid-sixties. That sort of opened the floodgates.

JM: *That had to be a good time in your life.*



JS: It was a good time, and it was tough, too. I was in high school all day and I'd come home and be working all night which is no fun when you're supposed to be in high school having fun. But it got me where I am so I'm very happy it worked out the way it did.

JM: *You're a big supporter of creator-owned rights and making sure that everyone who works on a project is well taken care of. Any comment on that?*

JS: Well, I think that being on the other side of the desk has helped me. I had no idea that you got only so many pennies per

copy. When my first check came it had this little paragraph on the back that said, "This is it. This is your flat rate. We now own your story and everything in it. Thanks." That... was a little disappointing. I always thought that, "Well, gee, if you write comics you must make a fortune!" [Laughs].

JM: *Which is still thought today by most people.*

JS: Yeah. What I ended up making on my first assignment averaged out to about $4.50 a page. It went up quickly after that once I became a regular but still that's kind of disappointing. So, I took the job at Marvel on the condition that I could change the way we did business. One of my conditions was to institute a royalty plan. It was in December of 1975 when I extracted that commitment from the president of the company who, at that time, was Jim Galton. He was fairly new with the company and when I asked that of him his exact words were, "You mean we don't (pay royalties)?" He had come out of book publishing where royalties were normal.

JM: *You got the idea for royalties from book publishing?*

JS: Yeah, sure. I had had some experience with the real world by that time and had gotten the drift on how things were going and as we got those programs into place I really tried to make it something that would be fair. I did some reading and studied business administration to determine just what is a fair compensation to the people that do the creative work. I came up with a formula that was good enough for the company but fairly compensated the creative people, I think. I've refined that myself since then and Marvel's kind of stuck on my first generation plan. Now, at Defiant, we have an even better plan. That's on the "universe' stuff. You almost have to have a company own the "universe" so that you have a sort of "central fire control." That doesn't mean you can't make the creators your partners [chuckles]. The main thing you have to watch is that if you have a universe with characters that interact then you can't just have one of the creators just dancing off with one of the characters and going to Dark Horse or something. So, the way it works is that these people trade some measure of control for some very good rewards.

And, as you asked, I'm also interested in just publishing some creator-owned material and making a fair deal. I think Dark Horse has been somewhat of an industry leader in that regard. Our deal is going to be just as good as Mike Richardson's -- maybe better -- but he really deserves a lot of credit for kind of expanding the envelope. We did creator-owned stuff at Marvel in the form of Epic but nothing like Mike does. He has a much better deal.

JM: *Dark Horse was a real pioneer in that field and now it has evolved into something of a market.*

JS: Yes, that's why Mike and I get along so well. We think very similarly.

JM: *You're responsible for forms of cover enhancements that seem to have become a catalyst for selling multiple copies. How do you feel about that now?*

JS: Actually, I think Marvel did a platinum edition of *Spider-Man* #1 that was one of the first cover enhancements. We (at Valiant) thought that was a cool idea. I never wanted to do multiple versions of a book but we thought that was a cool idea. It was a Marvel idea. They printed these special versions of the book and gave it to the retailers -- they were giving them away! Now, it's sort of mushroomed into this business all by itself. Retailers ended up selling the copies and it sort of turned into a monster. And that wasn't by any means the first cover enehancement. I think there had been a *Ghost Rider* glow-in-the-dark cover and some other things. I think that the idea that we (Valiant) had taken some bits and pieces of things that had come before and popularized it.

JM: *And it now has developed into this monstrous side market...*

JS: Well, I like the cover enhancements. My current philosophy is that if we do an enhancement it will be on *every* single copy. I don't want to put people in the position of having to buy two versions.

JM: *What about the jacking up of prices because of enhancements?*

JS: To me, it's a real question of value added. If you come up with something that's a good idea and it's editorially driven, it makes sense. People will say, "Oh, that's cool," and will be willing to pay an extra quarter for it. My best example I can give you is the black cover on *Solar, Man of the Atom* #10. (Barry) Windsor-Smith and I were talking about it one day on the phone and we faxed a couple sketches back and forth to one another. In those days I usually did a sketch and then Windsor-Smith would make it into real art [laughs]. We started thinking about what happened in this issue and Solar falls into a black hole so Barry jokes, "Let's just make it black!" We laughed at first but then I thought, "Hey! That's great!" So many good ideas start as jokes. But I wanted to do it all black, even the logo, which we embossed. Everybody tried to shout me down. They were like, "Jim, no, you can't do that!" Jon Hartz and

J. JAMES 93
M. WITHERBY

Steve Massarsky hated the idea. But in the end I insisted that we do it, and we did, and it worked really well. Editorially, it made sense. The embossing cost a bit extra so we had to charge a bit more, although it was a bigger book -- like 48 pages or something -- but it wasn't an outrageous price to pay.

JM: *It's not a secret what you basically think of companies like Marvel, Valiant and DC, and how business politics have somewhat corrupted the end product that they produce, but it seems you have a more positive view of Image Comics and Dark Horse. What is it exactly that you feel they're doing right?*

JS: First of all, I have mostly good things to say about everybody.

A lot of interviewers ask questions like, "Do you think Marvel has lost their creative strength?" That kind of leads you into talking about who has left there but Marvel still has some very good talent. Marvel is so big that you can almost pick which part of it you want to talk about. They have some very good resources besides the deep pockets. They've gone off in some bad directions but there are good things to say about them, too. I don't have a blanket condemnation of any of them.

That's the same with DC. They've done some really good stuff and then they've done some things that I just can't figure out.

As for Valiant, I find that I honestly just haven't been able to look at those books since I left there. Someone gave me one to read just the other day and I just couldn't do it. I tried to read it but...

JM: *Does it leave you with a bad taste in your mouth because of what was done?*

JS: The company was stolen from me. I've had people ask, "Don't you get good royalties from them?" They don't pay me a dime. I actually lost money in my experience with Valiant. It cost *me* money to make my ex-partners millionaires. People talk about Jack Kirby getting ripped off but at least Jack Kirby got paid -- I don't.

JM: *What a bummer.*

JS: Well, yeah. I feel like I created those characters and they don't even give me credit for that.

JM: *Especially isn't there something about* ***Harbinger****?*

JS: *Harbinger* was actually created a year before there was a Valiant. Originally it was a treatment that I was discussing with Paramount. Later, I wrote it into a comic book but, anyway, I look at that stuff and feel like there are these characters that I created. It's funny. When I worked at Marvel I talked to Steve Ditko, who certainly has enough grudges against Marvel, but we got along real well and had a mutual respect for one another so it came to the point where I was saying, "Steve, c'mon, draw a *Spider-Man*!" And he was like, "No! I won't do it!" He wouldn't draw *Spider-Man* and he wouldn't draw *Doctor Strange* and I couldn't understand why. Now, I understand exactly why. He created it. He made it what it is and now he's got to struggle for his next job and these people are multi-million-

aires! It's just not right. I don't care what the law allows you to get away with, there are some things that are just not right.

JM: I suppose it's made you somewhat paranoid.

JS: Absolutely.

Basically I went through the same naive curve that everyone goes through it seems. I started out as a writer and thought that was really cool. Then I discovered that you really couldn't do what you really wanted to do and that you really are "under the editor's thumb" and have to abide by all these rules and regulations. In order to get your ideas realized you actually have to be higher up the chain so I took a job as an editor. Then I became editor-in-chief and I found eventually that it doesn't matter what your title is. If you're an employee, especially if you have any principles, then sooner or later you're going to come into conflict with your employers. At that point, you're still hamstrung.

So, I thought, "Alright. I've got to start my own company. I've got to be the president and C.E.O. and a partner and, that way, I'm the boss." I did that and started up Valiant. I was a partner. I was the boss. I owned a part of it but then I found out that being a partner isn't enough. If you have principles, then sooner or later, you're going to come into conflict with your other partners. And if there's more of them, which in this case there were -- there was Steve Massarsky and his wife -- then they could outvote me. So, that didn't work either.

So, this time I set out with the money and the conditions that I had ownership and control. The investors here are silent partners and my "real" partners here is that everybody owns shares of Defiant that can *never* be taken away from them. These people cannot have their stock taken away from them ever.

But, anyway, I got off track a little here. The original question was something like I've said more positive things about Image and Dark Horse?

JM: Exactly.

JS: Well, I also have a fairly positive view of Malibu Comics. I think that a lot of people have wondered if Dark Horse and Malibu were going to perform, and they have. I think they've really done a commendable job and I understand that they're both doing pretty well. Image Comics is hard to lump together because they're really a bunch of smaller companies. There are some really great things about Image Comics and they're almost not in the same business that I'm in. I'm in the business of telling stories and being an entertainer and Image is doing more like what I call "rocket rides." A lot of people want to get

on a Todd McFarlane rocket and just go. It may not go anywhere [laughs] but it's a fun ride. I read *Spawn* #1 and I said, "Wow! That's great! I wonder what it's about." But it really was great. I could see especially where a younger reader would really get off on it. My first impression of *Spawn* was, "Nobody who paid two bucks for this book is going to want their money back!" Each guy (at Image) has different strengths, some more stronger than others, but one thing that you can't argue with them is that, by chance or design, they really have marketed themselves. They've really done a great job of capturing the imagination of the buying public and holding it. They've been the first group of guys to do it like rock stars.

JM: *They've been tagged, at times, the "rock'n'roll stars of comics."*

JS: Well, you can't take that away from them.

But one of the things I've said is that I'm especially impressed with the stuff that's come out of Dark Horse. The quality is excellent.

JM: *So far. They're going to spin some titles off from their Comics Greatest World stuff but I'm really looking forward to the Legend imprint stuff.*

JS: Yeah, that should be good.

JM: *We'll see what happens. But, after reading the first couple of issues of* ***Warriors of Plasm*** *I must say I very much enjoyed them. I'm looking forward to* ***Dark Dominion*** *and* ***The Good Guys*** *and I see that you eventually plan to publish as many as 14 titles out of Defiant and perhaps some creator-owned titles?*

JS: What we're trying to do here is make the universe as big as it can be and still be good – not get out of control. I think that if you try to manage more titles than that it becomes difficult to keep it in close continuity and all working together. I want to keep it like the early Marvels were, where you had to have them all, and you could.

JM: *Yeah, there was only, like, ten of them at a dime a copy so you could follow the whole Marvel Universe every month for a buck.*

JS: Exactly. Well, cost is a bit more now [chuckles] but that's the approach we're taking. Of course I'm wanting to do some creator-owned stuff, too, and we've been approached by several creators... Alan Weiss, who is doing some of our universe stuff, has some very good ideas and whenever you're approached by Chris Claremont you're tempted to listen. I want to do something with him. Uh, and Jim Steranko called me up. I think there's a lot off good stuff out there and I believe that Mike Richardson doesn't have to be the only one to do books like that. He may have a little friendly competition here soon.

JM: *So, Valiant was referred to in one of Defiant's press releases as "the rough draft" and with Defiant it's "this time for sure." You aimed high and it appears that you've hit.*

JS: Our goal is to be a leader in the industry. We really think that we can become a "force for good" in this business. I want to do it right. The name Defiant applies to more than my refusing to just collapse after going through what I did with Valiant, it refers to all of us like Chris Claremont, who had an ugly parting with Marvel, and Alan Weiss, who has had a lot of bad things happen to him in

his life, like Steve Ditko and all people who have run into these problems. What's common among all of these people is that none of them have lost "the fire." None of them have lost the desire and they're all still "defiant" and now we know what *not* to do. We're old enough to know how and we're all still young and strong enough to do it. David Lapham is still a young guy but he's the most mature 23-year old I know.

JM: *Wow, I had no idea he was that young.*

JS: Isn't he great? For 23, isn't he great? Can you believe it?

JM: *Really good.*

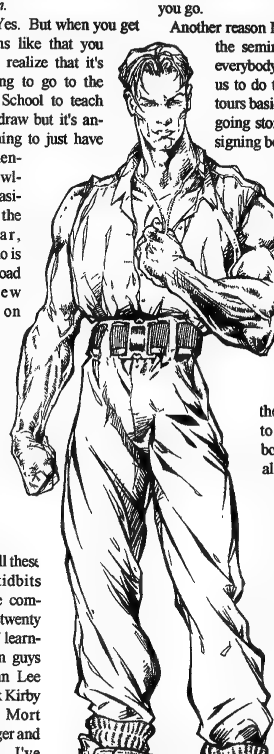
But it seems you want Defiant to be more than just a publisher, but a participator, thus the ***Good Guys*** *contest where actual readers will be featured in the book and I even heard about a "Bad Guys" for* ***Good Guys*** *contest for retailers and you've been doing your "How To Create Comics" seminars. How are all these things doing?*

JS: We're going to keep thinking of things like this to do because it's really interactive. I said in my first editorial that we're the most "reader-responsive company" because we answer more mail and we do more reader-oriented stuff.

The seminars came out of the fact that I realized so many people who come to comic book stores would love to be artists or writers or would even just love to draw their own comics not necessarily to be a full-time professional but for themselves. There's a need for information. I felt that I was one of the guys that had been around long enough to provide that information. The questions that people would ask me sometimes was, "Who rules the lines around the panel?" Well, the letterer does that.

JM: *I can understand where many people may actually not know that but professionals regard it as an almost ridiculous question.*

JS: Yes. But when you get questions like that you have to realize that it's one thing to go to the Kubert School to teach you to draw but it's another thing to just have fundamental knowledge. Basically, in the seminar, what I do is give a broad overview course on writing and all aspects of art and I talk about lettering a little bit. What I try to do is take all these great tidbits that I've compiled in twenty years of learning from guys like Stan Lee and Jack Kirby and Mort Weisenger and people I've worked with and simply sharing those important high points. Obviously, I can't teach a guy to write in an hour but hopefully I can give him some really good guidelines and generalities. This isn't the "How to do it the Defiant way" but this is all stuff that applies no matter where you go.



Another reason I came up with the seminar is because everybody was wanting us to do these tours but tours basically consist of going store-to-store and signing books and I sort of refer to those as the "greed tour."

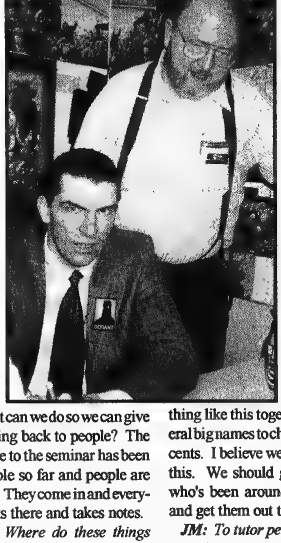
JM: *The "greed tour?"*

JS: It really is because basically everybody makes money. It's not bad for the fans. It's nice to go get your book signed and all. That's cool.

JM: *But doesn't that depend a bit on who's making the tour? Some companies--smaller companies -- tour primarily to promote their books and not to make bucks.*

JS: But to promote themselves what are they doing? They're trying to sell more books. If they don't sell enough books to pay for the tour then they're prob-

ably going to stop. I felt that we'd make enough money selling comics the normal way. What can we do to give back? What kind of tour could we do that's not money-oriented? I mean, sure we do that, too. We'll go to a store or two and sign some comic books but what can we do so we can give something back to people? The response to the seminar has been incredible so far and people are serious. They come in and everybody sits there and takes notes.



JM: Where do these things take place?

JS: The pilot program was done in a store in Anaheim, California, and we fit about 120 people in comfortably. That was good. The second one was in Nashville and we seated about 400 people in a hotel ballroom. The third was in San Diego and, again, we sat about 400 people in one of the convention rooms. The last one I did was at a theatre here in New York and we had a bit over 200 people there.

JM: So you've already spoken to close to 1,200 people.

JS: Yeah. We've been lucky enough to get some guest speakers to give my voice a rest. I drone on about writing for 50 minutes and uh... at one of the shows Len Wein was in the audience so he came up and joined me.

JM: "Hey, Len, come on d o w n ! " [Laughs]

JS: Well, I asked him first, of course. One time we had M i k e Witherby come up and talk a little bit about inking and Alan Weiss and D a v i d Lapham talk a bit about pencilling. One of these days I'd like to get something like this together with several big names to chip in their two cents. I believe we all should do this. We should get everybody who's been around for a while and get them out there to...

JM: To tutor people. To educate them.

JS: It's fun. And I guess we're going to keep doing it until people get tired of it. I'm also thinking of having it transcribed and published in some form. The thing is, I do it in three hours. I could spend a week on each discipline, easily, just from all the stuff I've built up over the years. I suppose if we keep going on with it, it'll expand or be divided into installments. It'll be like three hours of writing and then three hours on art and so forth.

JM: If that were made into a book it would be the size of a bible!

For someone who wants to be a comic book writer, what's your advice? I mean, do you have a standard format that you follow for telling good stories?

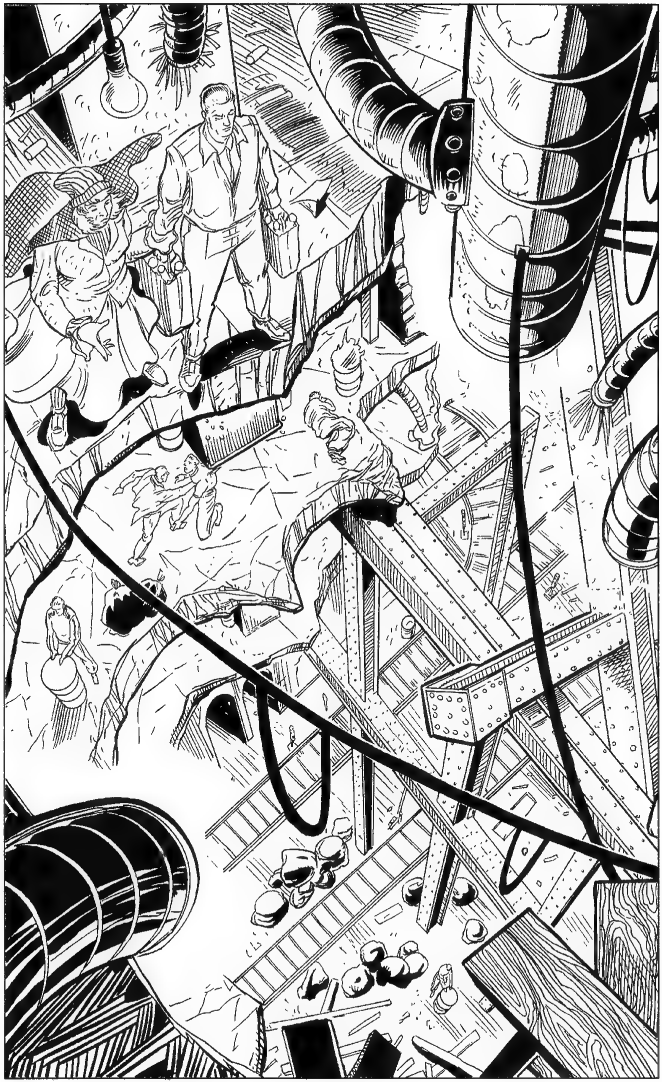
JS: I think that a lot of people sit down and they've read a lot of comics but they try to write before they really learn how. I don't think it would occur to anybody who didn't have knowledge of anatomy and perspective to just sit down someday and decide that they could draw a comic book. Since we all use language for other reasons -- writing letters or whatever -- people don't realize that there's anatomy and perspective and structure involved in writing a story that you have to learn. It's not enough to have a ream of paper and a typewriter. My first advice to people is to learn to write and in order to do that you need to do what you would do if you wanted to learn to draw; you study and take courses and attend seminars...

JM: [Chuckles] The Jim Shooter seminar...

JS: Well, you know, the seminar, by the way, is all donated. We provide materials to aid the seminar and we pay for them. Usually we get a co-sponsor who pays for the hall. All the admission money that is paid is entirely donated to a charity. No cost deductive is involved whatsoever.

JM: Very good. You've been heard to say that you feel you have a "physical communication problem" and that you'd like to be "a little more gentle and understanding" at times. Do you think that these things hinge on the fact that some people who don't know you have said, "Oh, Jim Shooter? Yeah. What a jerk."

JS: First of all, I'm six foot seven and the way I look when I'm just being normal is a natural scowl [chuckles] and I sometimes



have people come up to me and ask, "What's wrong?" And I'm like, "Uh, nothing. I'm fine."

JM: *You'd have made a good pirate.*

JS: Yeah [chuckles], I probably would have. But, anyway, I'm probably not the most natural warm and fuzzy type.

I also think that perhaps since I've been in this business for a long time that I sometimes move too fast for people. I've been given advice like if an artist is doing three things wrong, maybe just tell him two of them and save one for later. That's a good theory and it works sometimes but sometimes it's like, "You're on stage tonight!" I just feel like it's not fair to the reader. The reader expects it to be right.

So, I run into the problem where people feel like I'm pushing too hard. But we're performers and we've got to perform. I wish my delivery were more graceful. Stan (Lee) can tell you you're doing something wrong and you walk out feeling like a million dollars.

JM: *Constructive criticism is an art form in itself.*

JS: Absolutely, and Stan Lee had mastered it long ago. I struggle. People tell me, "Well, first, you tell 'em something nice and then you kind of ease into what they're doing wrong." That's so hard for me. I'm like, "Oh, uh, well... you do great eyebrows but let's talk about these ugly noses..." I don't know. I feel... hypocritical or like I'm trying to con these people and I don't want to do that. I'd rather be direct. Some people actually take my directness wonderfully well and have no problem with it but there are some who take it as more confrontational.

Communication is a major human problem and I'm probably not the best in the world at it. I feel like if you check with the people who work with me and the people who really know me then you'll see we get along. If I was a real problem to work with then Claremont wouldn't be back here. Weiss and Lapham wouldn't be here.

I started in the sixties in comics and back then editors were editors. They were the boss. You did what they said... Mort Weisenger, Julie Schwartz, and even Stan; people did what Stan wanted. He had a gentle way with them but they did it. I remember Gene Colan telling me one time that he had to re-draw pages and there was a stack that looked to be a whole ream of Jack Kirby pages in the office that never saw print; they were all rejected pages.

JM: *Wow.*

JS: Yeah, so editors were editors in those days and something happened in the late sixties or early seventies because when I came back (to Marvel), having been off doing commercial comics for a while, anarchy had set in. At Marvel, for instance, the first time anybody saw a book was when it was all finished! Writers were sending scripts directly to pencillers and pencillers are sending directly to the writers to script and then it went to the letterers!

JM: *The editor's job was just to proofread the stuff.*

JS: Yeah, to just sort of process the stuff through.

So, I came in and was given the responsibility of running Marvel Comics. First of all, the company was losing two and a half million bucks a year and I felt I had to do something. Most of the books were four months late! It was a nightmare. So, first thing I said is, "We've got to get these books out on time." When you call up a guy who's been drawing Potato-Man for a while and you say, "Look, you're three months late with Potato-Man so I'm going to get another artist to do a fill-in issue..." well, he hits the ceiling. He goes off and tells the fans that you're taking his book away from him. Then, there's a worse-case scenario where you have to call a guy and say, "Well, you're Potato-Man isn't good enough. Look, let me help you," or "why don't you just do the pencilling for a while," and they don't like that either. If you're going to be an editor then eventually you're going to have to say no to somebody and as soon as that happens then you're the badguy.

When you come in and you're attempting to establish order and improve some quality and change some bad practices and you're following a period of anarchy, then you come across looking like Mussolini no matter how gentle you are. But I think now that if you take a look at the early eighties comics, which was when I had finally gotten a lot of things and programs in place and we were paying people some decent rates, that was when Marvel was doing perhaps its best stuff ever; John Byrne and Claremont were rocketing high with *Uncanny X-Men* and there was Frank Miller doing his thing and Bill Sienkiewicz was taking off. It was like a mini-golden era in comics. Everything was doing great and Marvel was making a huge amount of money -- I think my unit made something like 17 million dollars a year -- and we were on time and we were doing all this great new stuff!

JM: *It was a good time.*

JS: It was a great time. Comics had entered a new age.

In the early seventies you would have been hard pressed to find somebody to say bad things about

me [chuckles] but after I turned things around...

JM: *Things turned around suddenly and wickedly.*

JS: Sure.

JM: *For the record, do you think we'll see the day when Marvel is not number one?*

JS: It's already happened. There was one month where DC was number one; the month that Superman died. It was the first time in an age but I think that that is going to happen with greater and greater frequency. I think if you look around the comic business at the end of next summer then it will be a far different picture.

JM: *Do you have any predictions as of the top five companies at that time?*

JS: Marvel will be among the top five and DC will still have pretty good odds but that's not quite as sure. I think Defiant will be there. I think Dark Horse and Malibu will be there. The ones I'm really not sure about are Image and Valiant, either of which could be in there or not. It's hard to tell with Image.

JM: *They may not even be around then.*

JS: It's not a true company so it's difficult to predict what that loose kind of confederation is going to do.

Valiant has come to a crossroads. They've got some good talent but after I left they kind of went way in a wrong direction. If they can come back to suceeding with the stuff *between* the covers then they should be in there. They've become a bit too gimmick-oriented and...

JM: *Maybe it was your dealings with Valiant that left a constant scowl on your face.*

JS: [Laughs] Actually I don't think about it that much. I'm not going to lie about it or sugar-coat it. I'm more angry about how David Lapham and Debbie Fix and Janet Jackson got ripped off. They counted on me and got ripped off. What happened is that my partner, Steve Massarsky, got married to a lady who was the investor and with that they controlled more of the company than I did. After we really started doing well there first plan was to sell the company to her brother. I would've become an employee and her brother would then become the president and C.E.O..

JM: *It would have been time for you to leave anyway.*

JS: Yeah. Did I want to stay and sign a ten-year employment contract to work for my partner's brother-in-law? Or do I want to leave? It came down to when I refused to sign the contract they simply fired me.

JM: *That had to be a stunning moment.*

JS: It was amazing. The fact that the laws in this country permit somebody who has created something to be literally ripped off on little technicalities... There was a clause in my contract that enabled them to just take away some of my stock and the terms of what they had to pay me -- they actually paid me less than my lawyer cost me -- and the bottom line is that if you look over in Europe this kind of thing can't happen. There's something over there stating that if you're a creator then what happened to me can never happen to you. But here? Aaah, it's just a commodity. It can be taken from you just like that.

JM: *That's the true advantage of living in a capitalistic society.*

JS: I suppose. But this time everything is set and I've made sure to have a lot of good people with me on the Defiant launch. We're going to give the readers the best we can.

JM: *Sounds good.*

WINNER! WINNER! WINNER! WI
ARENA MAGAZINE IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE THAT THE WINNER OF THE COVER ARTWORK OF ARENA #11 IS...
JOSEPH PUTYNKOWSKI, AGE 24, OF BELMONT, CALIFORNIA!!
LOWE

Comic News

Caliber News

Plasma Baby Returns

Coming in early 1994 will be a return of Mitch Waxman's cult hit, *Plasma Baby*. There will be a new miniseries which will feature not just the one Plasma Baby, but four Plasma Babies! Waxman, also the artist of *Cortez and the Fall of the Aztecs*, will bring his knowledge of Aztec history into play again in this miniseries which stands alone from the initial three-issue run.

Dorman Does Deadworld, Again

Dave Dorman, one of comicdom's premiere artists will be doing another issue in the Deadworld Chronicles series following the success of his first one, *Roadkill*. *Roadkill*, a one shot set in the Deadworld universe received a great amount of fan attention when it came out in June. Dorman will again team up with writer, Del Stone, Jr., to bring another self contained story featuring Hitch, the lead character in *Roadkill*. No schedule will be announced yet as Dorman wants to finish the project prior to announcing the release date.

Negative Burn Adds More Names

Negative Burn, the hot new anthology title from Caliber, which features some of the top names in comics continues to add to its luster. The series, which includes such names as Brian Bolland, Craig Hamilton, P. Craig Russell, Chas Truog, Michael Kaluta, Tim Bradstreet, Guy Davis, and J. Calafiore will soon be joined by such luminaries as Neil Gaiman, Jamie Hernandez, Richard Case and Paul Gulacy. Joining independent creators Jeff Smith and Martin Wagner, who will bw bringing shorts of their acclaimed series, *Bone* and *Hepcats* respectively will be Evan Dorkin who will bring his poular *Milk and Cheese* title in for a guest shot. The series, which is edited by Joe Pruett and Charles Moore, has already had the first three issues released and a fourth will debut in October.

DC News

Lobo Now Monthly

In space, no one can hear you frag.

The ongoing series comics fans everywhere have been demanding is here! *Lobo* kicks off with an appropriately irreverent, foil-embossed "zipper" image on the cover of issue #1 that will attract extra attention on the racks. And, in the tradition of the tremendously successful *Lobo: Portrait of a Victim*, the *Lobo* ongoing series has no "suggested for mature readers" label. Now everyone can get in on the action month after month.

Writer Alan Grant, penciller Val Semeiks, and inker John Dell (the creative team behind *Lobo: Portrait of a Victim*) deliver the kind of Lobo series comics fans everywhere have been clamoring for. *Lobo* is an action-packed fragfest, brimming over with good-natured gratuitous violence and twisted humor.

The first issue opens with Lobo in a typically destructive night on the town, a stop at Al's Diner for a few brews, some appalling violence, and then a trip to the local bounty office. There, Lobo takes an assignment to bring in Qigley, the most feared, loathed, despised, and powerful accountant in the universe. But things take an ugly turn when Lobo meets some heavy opposition in the Dead Boys, a bunch of bastiches with their own reasons for holding onto Qigley.

Lobo is an ongoing monthly series in the New Format, edited by Dan Raspler. It ships November 9 and retails for $2.95. Subsequent issues are $1.75.

David Surfs Into Aquaman

Fan-favorite writer Peter (*Star Trek: Who Killed Captain Kirk, Incredible Hulk*) David offers his own distinctive vision of one of the core characters of the DC Universe in the 4-issue mini-series *Aquaman: Time & Tide*. In the successful tradition of projects like *Man of Steel, Batman: Year One*, and *Green Lantern: Emerald Dawn*, *Aquaman: Time & Tide* revisits the origin and early career of the Sea King while laying the groundwork for his very exciting future. Artist Kirk (*X-Factor, Incredible Hulk Annual*) Jarvinen gives Aquaman a sizzling flair as the penciller of *Time & Tide*, with the able assistance of inker Brad Vancata.

Issue #1 kicks off with a look back at Aquaman's first encounter with surface world paranormals. The villainous Trickster has committed a heist on the high seas, and The Flash (Barry Allen) is in hot pursuit. These events draw the attention of Aquaman, who ends up going toe to toe with the Trickster on his own. Subsequent issues reveal untold aspects of Aquaman's early life, including what happened the first time he used his powers, the story of his first love, and his first meeting with his evil brother, Orm the Oceanmaster.

Following the run of *Aquaman: Time & Tide*, David, Jarvinen, and Vancata continue the Sea King's adventures in the new *Aquaman* ongoing series. *Aquaman: Time & Tide* is a 4-issue mini-series in the Standard Format, edited by Kevin Dooley. Issue #1 ships November 2 and retails for $1.50.

Special Halloween Projects

DC is playing up Halloween big this year with a lineup of exciting projects all designed to attract extra attention and fill comics shops with an eerie glow all through October.

The Spectre celebrates its ominous 13th issue with a sensational new cover that glows in the dark, by series artist Tom Mandrake. After the phenomenally successful issues #1 and #8, both of which featured stunning glow-in-the-dark covers by Mandrake, it's a safe bet comics fans will get in the "spirit" right away. *The Spectre #13*, written by John Ostrander, is offered in the New Format, ships October 12, and retails for $2.50.

The *Glow-In-The-Dark Spectre* retail poster features DC's spirit of vengeance in an eerie, 22" x 34" poster with new art by Mandrake. DC's first glow-in-the-dark poster makes the perfect pinup for Halloween. The *Glow-In-The-Dark Spectre* retail poster ships October 19 and is priced at $5.95.

The Spectre: Crimes and Punishments trade paperback sports a new glow-in-the-dark cover by Mandrake. This collection reprints the first four fear-fraught issue of *The Spectre* by writer John Ostrander and artist Tom Mandrake. *The Spectre: Crimes and Punishments* trade paperback is edited by Bob Kahan, ships October 26, and retails for $9.95.

Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight Halloween Special #1 features an appropriately sinister foil-enhanced cover with embossed art by interior artist Tim Sale (artist of the popular "Blades" storyline in *Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight*). Writer Jeph (*Action Comics Annual #5*) Loeb tells the story; of one of Batman's early encounters with the self-styled Terror of Gotham, the Scarecrow. This 80-page Special, edited by Archie Goodwin, is presented in the Deluxe Format with no ads, ships October 12 and retails for $6.95.

Children's Crusade Crossover

Neil Gaiman, the critically-acclaimed author of *The Sandman* and *Death: The High Cost of Living*, writes the two "bookend" issues in the first-ever Vertigo Annuals event, *The Children's Crusade*. The cover of *The Children's Crusade #1* features a fifth metallic ink that enhances a painted cover by John Totleben, former artist of *Swamp Thing* and *Miracleman*. Chris Bachalo, artist of *Death: The High Cost of Living* and *Shade, The Changing Man*, provides the interior pencils for *The Children's Crusade*

#1, with inks by Mike Barreiro.

Six writers and a host of artists have joined forces to present this epic tale which encompasses five Vertigo Annuals and two "book-end" specials, shipping weekly. The story begins when Rowland and Paine -- two dead boy-detectives introduced in *The Sandman #25* -- learn of the existence of Free Country, a strange and magical place reserved only for children who have escaped from, or been stolen from, the "real" world. Over the years, Free Country has been a haven for abused and unwanted children. But the denizens of that far place are making mysterious plans, plans that will hinge on the recruitment of several young beings of power. Now the future of two worlds will depend on Suzy, the child Black Orchid; Maxine Baker, the daughter of Animal Man; Tefe Holland, the daughter of Swamp Thing; Dorothy Spinner of the Doom Patrol; and Tim Hunter, the young mage first seen in *The Books of Magic*. their stories are told in *Black Orchid Annual #1, Animal Man Annual #1, Swamp Thing Annual #7, Doom Patrol Annual #1,* and *Arcana Annual #1* (featuring Tim Hunter), and come together for the startling conclusion in *The Children's Crusade #2* -- where the life of one of them will be changed forever.

Tying into this Vertigo Annuals event is the *Swamp Thing Retail Poster*, featuring Vertigo's premier monster from the marshes, in a beautifully painted and exquisitely detailed rendering by Michael Zulli. The *Swamp Thing Retail Poster* is priced at $4.95 and ships October 19.

The Children's Crusade #1 is a 64-page New Format book. It features a metallic fifth cover ink, ships October 19 and retails for $3.95.

Double Helpings of Danger

Batman: Two-Face Strikes Twice is a special 2-issue Prestige Format "flip-book" mini-series containing two related encounters between Batman and his duality-obsessed adversary, Two-Face, with two exciting covers on each issue.

The stories in *Batman: Two-Face Strikes Twice* are presented in two very distinct styles. The first half of each issue is a tribute to the Batman stories of the Golden Age of comics, with writer Mike W. (*Outsiders, Batman: Year Two*) Barr and artist Joe (*Batman: Shadow of the Bat, Guy Gardner*) Staton adopting that classic style to chronicle one of the Dark Knight's earliest encounters with Two-Face. In each issue, the cover of the "Golden Age" half of the book is provided by Dick Sprang, whom editor Dennis O'Neil refers to as the "quintessential artist of Batman's early years."

The "flip side" of each issue is also written by Barr and painted in a modern style by the critically acclaimed Daerick (*The Vampire Lestat*) Gross. This story is a direct sequel to the one that takes place in the Golden Age, and is set in the present day. Each installment of the "modern age" story features a painted cover by Gross.

In addition, the original Robin, Dick Grayson, is featured in the "Golden Age" story, while the current Robin, Tim Drake, co-stars in the "modern" story.

Batman: Two-Face Strikes Twice is a 2-issue mini-series in the Prestige Format, edited by Dennis O'Neil. Each issue is 48 pages and retails for $4.95. Issue #1 ships October 26. Issue #2 ships two weeks later, November 9.

The Shadow War Is Coming

In November, DC Comics and Milestone Media, Inc. present the second wave in the Milestone line of comics, with an explosive crossover event, and the launch of two new Milestone titles.

The Big Bang was just the beginning.

Just over a year ago the face of the planet changed with the introduction of a terrifying additive to an experimental tear gas. Hundreds died, but the survivors were endowed with inhuman power.

Now someone with a secret agenda intends to harvest the fruits of that genocidal experiment. For if the world is to survive, it will require power. And the heroes of Dakota will be the soldiers of a Shadow War.

Shadow War is a dramatic crossover event running throughout November in *Hardware, Icon, Blood Syndicate,* and *Static*. In it, the Dakota heroes become

embroiled in a civil war within the mysterious organization known only as the Shadow Cabinet. Before Shadow War ends, the incredible truth behind the Big Bang is revealed, and two new Milestone books will make their debut: *Xombi* and *Shadow Cabinet*.

Be on the lookout for upcoming details into this exciting crossover spectacular.

Fleetway News

Wired and Ready

Welcome to the year 2040, where virtual reality has become the norm, and huge corporations battle to maintain cyber-supremacy. To experience anything you'd like, or access information directly into your mind, you either have to wear a parasuit or have computer implants placed in your brain. If you choose the latter, you're a Wirehead -- a Paraspace adept! One of the best in the world (both real and virtual) is Lambourghini Taichi. "Lamb" to his friends, his software is the most complex, his cyber-defenses the most complete, and his command of Paraspace the most intricate. He's so good, Freetrade Inc. wants his services. The only problem is, Freetrade is the largest conglomeration of criminal activity ever devised, and they don't take "no" for an answer. If they can't have Lamb, no one else in the Net is going to have him either. Looks like being popular does have its downside!

Written by Mark Elyes and illustrated by Mike Hadley, *Wireheads* is a 2-issue mini-series that puts criminal greed together with virtual reality to create a cyber-adventure of staggering proportions. Lamb Taichi is a foppish sort of fellow, but looks are deceiving. In Para or Real space, he's a dangerous and cunning opponent who's not prepared to work for killers.

Introducing Kola Kommandos

Written by Steve Parkhouse and drawn by Anthony Williams, *Kola Kommandos* takes a hard look at soft drinks, hit men, and mind control! The Kompany even has its own superhero pitchmen -- Captain Cholesterol and the Lo-Fat Kid! You'll never look at a can of soda the same way again! Contains material never before published in the US. In fully painted color, deluxe format with cover art by Anthony Williams.

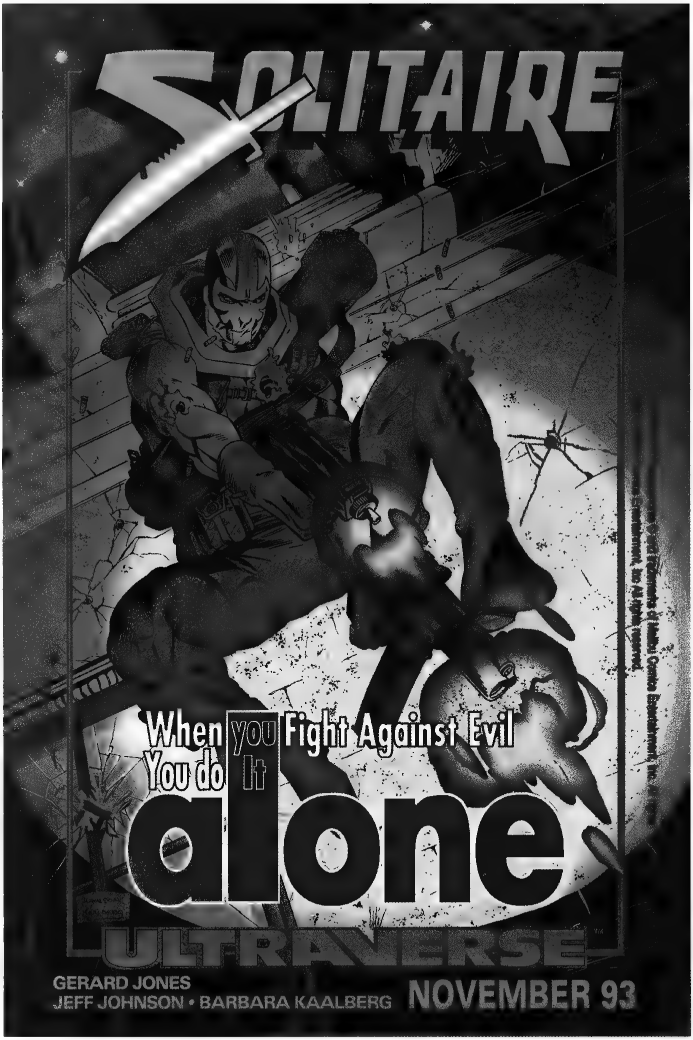
Image News

Sears And Moore In Violation

The new *Violator* miniseries by Alan Moore and Bart Sears could be summed up with ease. My Three Sons Goes To Hell!

That's just about what happens when the devil sends the Phlebiac Brothers to Earth to kick their little brother's butt. Who is their brother? That's right, the Violator! Things look pretty bad for Spawn's number one bad guy. The Violator is all dressed up in his human form with nowhere to go. The devil has taken away his power to change forms and this makes him easy prey for his brothers of badness.

The Violator figures that the only way to flog the four Phlebiac Brothers is to enlist the aid of Spawn. Does the phrase "a cold day in hell" ring a bell? Will Spawn and the Violator join and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When you Fight Against Evil
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NOVEMBER 93

A Very Special ULTRAVERSE Comic Book

FLOOD RELIEF

Amount Red Cross disaster services provides free of charge and are fully by contributions from concerned Your support will ensure that ca... when we are needed most.

On behalf of the people of the ... Red Cross, we extend our deepest appreciation to Malibu ... for donating their time and ... to produce this special ... humanitarian project and to everyone who ... by supporting the ... from Red Cross in their participation in ... effort.

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make a true unholy alliance? You'll just have to read it, won't you?

This miniseries promises so much spittin' and spewin' of Spawn action and vile and vigorous Violator vehement vernacular that the reader's head will explode just trying to contain all of the story and art laid before them. Award-winning writer, Alan Moore, has turned the heat up a few notches in *The Violator* miniseries, introducing a brand new twist of devilish excitement to the Spawn universe. Bart Sears adds his truly innovative art style to this series and carves out his version of the Violator and Spawn that rivals Todd's. Not to be missed!

When asked about the reasoning behind *The Violator* miniseries, creator Todd McFarlane had this to say, "When I assigned Alan Moore *The Violator* miniseries, I wanted the readers to come away from it wanting even more... I want him to be the villain that the readers want to see return again and again. He's mean, he's not lean, he's a violating machine. I want the Violator to be the biggest and the baddest, the nastiest and the fattest!"

A Troll To Tell

He's 3'4" and 2,000 years old. He's looking for a good time. He's Troll! He's seen it all so far. Check your pictures in the history books -- you'll see 'em right there with everyone form Napoleon to George Washington when he was crossing the Delaware! You name it, he's done it! And now he's going to be joining up with one of Image's super teams! Which one? Read the book!

Troll is a special one shot by Rob Liefeld and hot newcomer Jeff Matsuda, whose work can also be seen in *Brigade* #0 and *Youngblood: Strikefile* #4. *Troll* will be comin' at ya' from Extreme Studios in November!

Shadowhawk's At It Again

"He's a vigilante, not a superhero. He's not exactly what you'd call a role model," says Jim Valentino about his creation, Shadowhawk.

Paul Johnstone, an ex-D.A., got so fed up with the court system that he began taking the law into his own hands. Knowing who he is is only part of the puzzle. The next question one must ask is why? What would make someone put on a suit of armor and go into the night? What would make someone think that breaking spines is a reasonable solution to the crime problem? Shadowhawk's origin is the subject of Volume III and the answers provided promise to shock you. *Shadowhawk III, Through the Past Darkly* is a continuation of the story, but it also adds more information to the general myths defining this character.

Shadowhawk III, Through the Past Darkly will ship in November from Image Comics.

Kitchen Sink News

A Nightmare Asylum in Color

Around 1984, Kevin Eastman co-created four pizza-chomping, ninja reptiles named after Renaissance artists. You say you know that story? Well, did you

also know that at the same time, another project was festering in the darkest recesses of Eastman's mind?

Over the last few months, you've seen glimpses of this project previewed on high-quality posters and in the pages of *Heavy Metal* magazine. Now the wait is over. *Melting Pot* is here!

This four-issue full color comic book series debuts in October and retails for $2.95. It is written and drawn by Eastman and comics artist supreme Simon Bisley.

After eons spent watching the universe unfold, a near-omnipotent, celestial being arrives at a twisted revelation. In a remote corner of the cosmos where no life form has dared venture, he begins to shape a world of his own design. Its population is plucked from the outcasts and vermin of one million different planets. This is Eden, a place where survival is the sole obsession and chaos reigns supreme.

From out of the chaos, a barbaric usurper emerges with the power to rule this wretched world. But there is one part of Eden that he has struggled to possess: The Holy Land. Now the screams of bloody conquest are drowned by the whispers of an ancient prophecy about to be fulfilled: the coming of Eden's savior and the deliverance of Melting Pot.

Back in 1990, the first look at this project was published in the *Melting Pot Sketchbook* by Eastman and Talbot. For the limited series, Eastman enlisted the talents of the incomparable Simon Bisley. Perhaps best known for his work on *Judgment on Gotham* featuring Batman and Judge Dredd, Bisley has lent his dynamic illustrative ability to *Lobo*, *ABC Warriors*, *Slaine* , *Max Carnage* and Michael T. Gilbert's *Mr. Monster*. His vivid, in-your-face paintings have also graced the cover of *Doom Patrol*, *Blast!*, *The Lords of Misrule* and *Heavy Metal*.

You already know the extraordinary creations that Eastman and Bisley have conjured up on their own. Now that they've joined forces on *Melting Pot*, October is about to become the hottest month of the year!

Let This Black Cat Cross Your Path

He's back with a new book, and once again Kitchen Sink Press has him. He's Richard Sala, fresh from a Harvey Award nomination for *Hypnotic Tales*, returning this time with:

Black Cat Crossing, a 96-page trade paperback that includes 26 pages of new stories, an eight-page color section, and personally selected reprint material. The book retails for $10.95, is for all ages, and is coming in time for Halloween.

In *Black Cat Crossing*, Sala examines pertinent issues that concern him and should concern all clear-thinking Americans. From mad psychiatrists/scientists/hypnotists, to the insidious nature of subliminal advertising, to censorship, Richard Sala bravely tackles them all -- and then moves beyond to the realm of the psychic and the surreal.

There are two major new stories in *Black Cat Crossing*. The first, "The Fellowship of the Creeping Cat," is 13 -- how appropriate -- pages long. The second tale, 11 pages long, features Mr. Murmur, last seen in Sala's solo book for Dark Horse Comics, *Thirteen O'Clock*. The eight-page color section features two new works.

Richard Sala has a growing audience both within and without the comics field. He wrote and drew the story *Invisible Hands* for Liquid Television on MTV. His work has appeared in *Blab!* and other top comics anthologies.

His themes include the hidden manipulation of innocent of unaware people by diabolical perpetrators; the omnipresence of evil in a B-movie world of dark alleys and sleazy nightclubs; the masks we all wear to hide our true identities. He conveys these themes in a wry, humorous, sometimes bizarre way. Sala's script and art work hand in hand to create a powerful whole.

In *Black Cat Crossing*, coming this October, you'll see why Richard Sala is one of the best cartoonists working today!

The Chilling Upturned Stone

What begins with four boys and a pumpkin harvested for Halloween leads to a horrifying cry for vengeance from a lone, tortured soul. This is the tale of *The Upturned Stone*, a 64-page, full color, 8 1/2 by 11 1/2" hardcover graphic album, written and drawn by Scott Hampton. It retails for $14.95, and is suggested for mature readers.

While searching for a jack-o-lantern in Old Oak Cemetery, four friends stumble upon the king of all pumpkins... and something unexpected. Hidden by the autumn leaves is the headstone of a teenager whose murder remains unsolved. The friends soon realize they have invoked a phantom yearning for vengeance. How else could the boys explain their sleep being plagued by identical nightmares?

Driven by powers from beyond, they set out on a mission of retribution that will bring them face to face with true evil...

For the boys, the adventure of

The Upturned Stone is more than an encounter with the supernatural; it is a journey to the crossroads of childhood and adulthood. As they make their crucial decision to avenge the murder victim, they bid farewell to their own age of innocence.

Scott Hampton is known for his stunning painted work on Robert E. Howard's *Pigeons From Hell, Silverheels* and *The Books of Magic*. More recently, he collaborated with Archie Goodwin on the Harvey Award winning *Batman: Night Cries. The Upturned Stone* marks Hampton's major writing debut.

The Upturned Stone is an eerie ghost story that begs to be read by candlelight; a subtle, mesmerizing work that will refrigerate your veins and make your neck hairs stand on end -- watch for it this Halloween!

1st Series Madman #1 Reprinted

This is the book that started it all. This is the book that's been impossible to find... until now.

In October, Kitchen Sink Press reprints the first issue of Michael D. Allred's *Madman*. This is the 48-page, squarebound, ultra-funky costumed hero for the '90s. It retails for $3.95.

Allred's name pops up more and more in comics everyday -- from Epic's *The Everyman* to DC's *The Geek*, among others. *Madman*, however, is pure Allred vision in the "wonky" tradition of *Grafik Muzik*, his 1990 series for Caliber Press.

Most notably, *Madman* recently won the 1992 Harvey Award for Best New Series!

Join Madman in a race against time to recover the scientific journals of his mentor, Dr. Boiffard, and resurrect him from cryogenic deep freeze. Dr. Boiffard is the only one who knows Madman's true identity and the source of his mysterious powers of precognition. Your blood pressure will rise and your eyeballs will chatter as Madman battles the diabolical Mr. Monstadt and his cronies with his sure-fire slingshot and lead-weighted Duncan yo-yo.

This first issue reprint of the 1992 sleeper hit is not to be missed -- and remember issue 2 and 3 in the *Madman* series are still in print.

Lightning News

New, Hot Talent Unleashed

Lightning Comics has picked up some very hot talent during the last few months. Get ready for a big surprise when you see the works of their new pencillers, Karl Kerschl, Terral Lawrence and Eric Pense.

Karl Kerschl, 18, of Canada, makes his industry debut in September on Lightning's next smash hit, *Judgment Day*. Many industry experts at Diamond Distributors, Friendly Frank's and Kingpin Comics believe that Karl is on his way to stardom. Diamond and Frank's say his work is very accomplished and has a blend of Quesada and Sears influence -- amazing work for an 18 year-old.

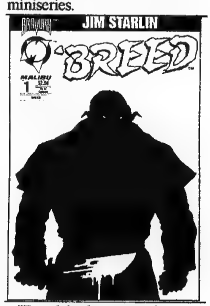
Karl was a hit during Lightning Comic's 1993 New York tour, signing black and white promotional copies of *Judgment Day #1*. Fan mail has already started pouring in at Lightning headquarters.

After pencilling *Judgment Day #1*, Karl has picked up the assignment as series artist on the highly anticipated *Perg* comic.

Malibu News

Starlin Joins Creator-verse

Jim Starlin has recently signed with Malibu Comics to both write and draw *Breed*, an all-new adventure series. The first of six issues is scheduled for a January debut, after which Starlin will produce two other six-issue miniseries.



"Breed is the story of a man who discovers he's half-human/half-demon and how he deals with his heritage," says Starlin, whose *Dreadstar* set a new standard for creator-owned projects back in the early 1980s. "Working in this horror/adventure genre allows me to explore some rather disturbing territory I've never

ventured into."

According to the publisher, *Breed* is three sets of 6-issue miniseries that were originally designed as a series of graphic novels.

"With a creator like Starlin," says editor, Tom Mason, "fans can expect great art and strong stories. Retailers can expect to see a commitment to promotion, marketing and on-time shipping of these creator-owned titles."

Other names announced to join this creator-verse (the actual name is withheld as of now pending trademark clearance) by Malibu include Howard Chaykin, Gil Kane, Walter Simonson, Dan Brereton, Peter David and Dan Jurgens.

Cuomo Works Hard For The Money

Dinosaurs For Hire is taking a bite out of the Big Apple. Except it isn't the Big Apple as we know it. Sure the streets are still mean, and the taxi drivers still take the most circuitous routes. But there are some major differences in this New York.

For one thing, Gov. Mario Cuomo isn't (governor, that is). Mr. Cuomo's brief cameo shows him in a new job. It may disappoint the Democrats, but he's not President of the United States!

"I spent a lot of time around New York City in my youth," said Tom Mason, *Dinos* creator/writer. "The exploits of Cuomo were treated with the same reverence as the Mets or the Yankees."

Because *Dinosaurs For Hire* is set in a New York that is slightly altered from the conventional Manhattan, Mason felt an update on Cuomo's status was in order, he said.

To check it out, pick up a copy of *Dinosaurs For Hire* #9, on sale in October. It's chapter 5 of the Genesis crossover and features a cover by comic legend, Curt (*Superman*) Swan.

Wild Coupon, *Rune* #0, *The Solution* #0

This October, look for Barry Windsor Smith in the Ultraverse. He has joined Malibu Editor-In-Chief Chris Ulm, in creating the hottest Ultra-book so far, *Rune* #0.

Rune is more than just a new Ultraverse book. It comes complete with its own special program, initially appearing as a series of three-page inter-connected stories in all eleven of the Ultraverse titles coming out in October. All eleven, when put together, will make up a 33-page introduction to the regular series. "We wanted to do it this way to give fans a sneak peek at *Rune*," Barry Windsor Smith and the possibilities for the Ultraverse in the new year," said John Riley, Malibu's Sales and Marketing Director.

As always with Malibu, there's more. The 33-page introduction will be offered as a Rune #0 collection. "We also thought it would be nice," said Riley, "to offer the fans the entire story in one bound volume."

There is only one way to get this item from Malibu. Each October Ultraverse title will come complete with a serialized coupon. Serialized coupons are special because they do not have to be cut out of the book. "There's probably nothing a fan hates to do more than mutilate a brand new book," said Riley; "We don't like it anymore than they do, so we implemented the serial number approach. This way they can just photocopy their coupon and send in its copy without having to cut anything or to buy anything extra." As the coupons come in, the serial numbers on each coupon will be documented. Any duplicate copies will be spotted and voided. Collect all eleven titles, mail in the copies or the originals of the coupons to Malibu and receive your free copy of *Rune* #0.

Along with the *Rune* #0, Malibu will also send a companion book, *The Solution* #0. "We wondered: 'what could we do to make this even more special?'" Riley said, "So we're offering another Ultraverse #0 as well," This is a unique opportunity for Ultraverse fans to learn about characters' histories. "Number zero books are significant beacause fans can find out aspects of the characters' lives that ultimately are important to the future developments of the series," said Riley.

In addition to all this, Malibu is giving fans a short cut in the coupon collecting. The September *Ultra-Monthly* will feature a Wild Coupon to help out in the quest to obtain *Rune* #0 and *The Solution* #0. "We recognize that collecting all 11 titles is not an easy task, "said Riley, "so we offer the Wild Coupon to replace

one—but only one—of the 11 title coupons."

As a result, after buying 11 of the October Ultraverse titles (or 10 titles and one *Ultra-Monthly*) and sending in all 11 coupons to Malibu, fans will be able to add 11 Ultraverse titles, each with a 3-page *Rune* back-up story and one each of *Rune* #0 and *The Solution* #0 to their collections.

It comes to a total of 13 collectibles in all. "Basically, at Malibu we like to feel that when we do something, we do it better than anyone expects," said Riley, "and this is one of the best opportunities we've offered so far!"

Marvel News

Trail Blazin'

Midnight Sons readers who can't get enough of the mysterious John Blaze will get a bird's eye view into his life when *Blaze*, a new limited series, premieres this month! This new member of the Midnight Sons Universe will be emblazoned with the new trade dress. Thanks to the "Road to Vengeance: The Missing Link," Blaze is now sporting a cool new look, incredible new powers, and a wicked new pair of wheels. This boy is badder than ever! And he needs to be this month, when his family is kidnapped by a new villain who'll soon play a major role in the Midnight Sons Universe.

Not only has John's family been snatched, they've been brainwashed, as well. If and when he finds them, will they know him? Or will they want him dead? Joining Blaze in his campaign to recover his family is Seer and a Carnival ally, Clara Menninger. Their progress is hindered when the supernatural magnet aspect of Blaze's nature is amplified, drawing magical menaces from every corner of the universe at them. Along the way, John and Clara learn more about the Blood. Are these enigmatic creatures friends, foes, or what? Set after "Siege of Darkness," *Blaze* provides tantalizing clues to the outcome of that blockbuster crossover without giving away the ending! (Look for the exclusive story on *Blaze* and all the Midnight Sons projects in the deluxe *Ghost and the Midnight Sons* magazine, scheduled for release October 5!)

Due to their incredible success, the Midnight Sons are breaking away from the Marvel mainstream to form their own sub-Universe! Each of the Sons titles will be bestowed with a brand new trade dress and an icon establishing it as a member of the Midnight Sons Universe. To mark this momentous event in Marvel history, the Sons are the subject of a 17-part crossover that will change them forever. The "Sege of Darkness" kicks off in *Nightstalkers #14* and continues in *Ghost Rider #44* and *45*, *Darkhold #15* and *16*, *Morbius #16* and *17*, *Nightstalkers #15*, *Spirits of Vengeance #17* and *18*, and *Dr. Strange #60* and *61*, and *Marvel Comics Presents #143* through *146*! *Spectacular Spider-Man #207* and *208*, along with *Silver Sable #19*, are also part of the excitement, tying in with the "Siege!"

Zarathos is back, along with the evil Lilith and her depraved offspring, the Lilin. Lilith and the Lilin are a big hit with Midnight Sons fans, and readers have been clamoring for new of Zarathos since the new *Ghost Rider #1*. Marvel will tell all here, including whether or not Ghost Rider is really Zarathos!

During the "Siege," the Sons suspect that one of their own will betray them. But, with terrifying consequences, it is not who they suspect!

When the "Siege" concludes, a well-loved Midnight Son will have died. And there's no turning back! Dr. Strange will join the Midnight Sons, and his monthly title, *Dr. Strange*, will fall under the guidance of Group Editor Bobbie Chase, who is credited for the considerable success of the rest of the Midnight Sons books.

"Siege of Darkness" features the talents of Howard Mackie, D.G. Chichester, Ron Garney, Rurik Tyler, Greg Wright, Chris Cooper, and the up-and-coming Isaac Cordova and Henry Martinez, David Quinn, and Melvin Robi. In conjunction with the "Siege," we're publishing a deluxe *Ghost Rider and the Midnight Sons* magazine with a George Pratt cover and behind-the-scenes info at the supernatural happenings in the Marvel Universe!

Pins and Needles

Clive Barker's very popular star of the silver screen gets his own ongoing series this month, scheduled to premiere with a beautiful foil-embossed cover! *Pinhead* introduces a mysterious and powerful villain who forces Pinhead to take a journey through time. The first stop is the old American West, where Pinhead encounters Arrowhead, a previous incarnation of himself. Count on an arrow-thrusting, pin-pricking free-for-all to result!

Pinhead premieres with a gorgeous cover by Kelley (*Sandman, Venom: The Madness*) Jones. Written by D.G. (*Daredevil, Hellraiser*) Chichester and penciled by hot newcomer Dario Carrasco, *Pinhead* premieres to coincide with the conclusion of the *Pinhead/Marshal Law* limited series.

Then, Barker brings his mastery of the macabre to Marvel in his new book, the *Harrowers*. This new, ongoing series hits the stands in October with a stunning glow-in-the-dark cover! The book deals with heroes selected by the mysterious Morte Mamme, an ancient goddess who pre-dates Christianity! The Harrowers are enlisted in the war against the

evil Leviathan. Our heroes enter hell on a mission to save an innocent boy being held there. As they progress, they begin to question their calling and the mission itself, making them easy prey for the Machiavellian Machinations. Special guest stars include the General and Pinhead! This unique series is written by Zinc Ink and providing the artwork is the marvelous Gene Colan who's no stranger to horror, being the artist of the classic *Tomb of Dracula*.

Then, get ready to be frightened out of your skin when *Hellhound* arrives! This Epic title is so spooky Marvel recommends it for mature readers only! This beautifully painted limited series is based on the old American folklore about a man who sells his soul to the Devil in exchange for success as a blues musician. But John Roberts soon finds out that being the Devil's messenger is not a bargain. Floyd Hughes' glorious art accompanies John Miller's macabre writing. Not to be missed!

Wolverine Helps World Wildlife Fund

Peter David teams up with Richard Howell to write and draw *Wolverine in Global Jeopardy*, a very special comic produced in cooperation with World Wildlife Fund. Available only through the U.S. direct market (unfortunately, Marvel can fulfill orders only for distributors in the United States and its possessions), 10% of the cover price from this one-shot book will benefit World Wildlife Fund. This comic is dedicated to the memory of Carol Kalish, Marvel's former Vice President of Product Development and a pioneer in the direct market.

Wolverine in Global Jeopardy is printed on recycled coated paper and features an embossed cover of heavier recycled coated stock, which is enhanced with a fifth color. The book contains 32 ad-free pages with 16 pages of

story, pitting the X-Men's Wolverine against Namor, Ka-Zar, and Shanna before he joins them in combating water pollution, animal poaching, and the Conservator, a villainous environmental zealot. The other 16 pages alternate with the story, reprinting actual photographs by world renowned wildlife photographer, Gerry Ellis, which are accompanied by text to educate the reader about different endangered animals and their plights. Between the Wolverine-centered story and the hot creative team, this book is bound to be a big hit with readers. The *Spider-Man* comic Marvel published in cooperation with the U.S. Committee for UNICEF last year was a great success. With your help, *Wolverine in Global Jeopardy* will surpass that success, making money for World Wildlife Fund, an eminently worthy cause.

Return of Deathlok

October heralds the return of Luther Manning, the original Deathlok! And he'll be featured in not just one book but in two. The cyborg from the future will star with Captain America in the 64-page bookshelf comic, *Captain America: Deathlok Lives* and then he'll make his appearance in *Deathlok #30.*

Captain America: Deathlok Lives, will feature three reprinted stories from *Captain America #286-288.* In this nail-biting story, Roxxon plans the destruction of all Earth's superheroes, a plan that will lead to World War III, unless Captain America and Deathlok can stop it. This cliffhanger is brought to you by writer J.M. DeMatteis with beautiful artwork by Mike Zeck and John Beatty.

Deathlok #30 is the beginning of a 4-part story line titled "Cyber Strike." The original Deathlok, long believed to be dead, returns from the grave and he's got a problem with the new Deathlok. Check it out when the two deadliest cyborg go at it for ragging rights to the name Deathlok. The difference between the old Deathlok and the new one is that the old one lived up to his name -- he killed when necessary (and he may have to this time)!

This issue is a great jumping-on point for old and new readers. This exciting tale is brought to you by scribe extraordinaire Greg Wright and the art team of Kevin Kobasic and Greg Adams.

Mirage News

Turtles Leap Into Full Color

Beginning in October the ongoing adventures of the Turtles will be presented in full mind-boggling color! After a nine plus year history of publishing the original *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* in black and white, the decision to switch to color now could not have been more difficult or more important. This change was seen not as an abandonment of their black and white roots, but rather as the natural evolution of the series.

With the "City at War" saga, Kevin and Pete re-established the continuous storyline and gave readers a new reason to pick up the book month after month. The return to a grittier storyline was also well-received by Turtle fans old and new.

The success of the new color books like *Dino Island* and *Usagi Yojimbo* made the move up to a full color *TMNT* series a logical next step.

As with the publication of *Usagi Yojimbo*, the content and tone of the series will remain the same as it was in its black and white incarnation. These will still be the original, gritty, kick-ass Turtles (Yes, they will ALL be wearing red bandannas!) and events will pick right up where they left off at the end of issue #62.

To draw attention to the addition of color and to make the new color series even more approachable to new fans, the first color issue will be numbered as *TMNT Volume 2 #1.* Long-time Turtle artist (and co-writer on "City at War") Jim Lawson is heading up the creative team as he writes and pencils the series. A.C. Farley is providing a full color wrap-around cover for the first issue and if schedules allow, he will continue to be the regular cover artist! And rest assured, Eastman and Laird will be overseeing the whole thing.

So be on the lookout, because starting in October, you'll be seeing green!

Sky Comics News

Sky Comics has announced its upcoming list of publications launching themselves into the ether. Heralding the onslaught, in November, look for *Seeker: Vengeance* in full color by Joe Martin, Willie (*Southern Knights*) Peppers and Allen Freeman. It's dark and gritty "superhero-sorta" action as FBI Agent Tracy LeMaster is inhabited by the spirit-form of an ancient Atlantean sorcerer to enact vengeance on her fiance's murderer. She takes on the guise of Seeker, busts a lot of windows and busts a lot of heads. Visually, this is one of Sky's coolest characters. *Seeker: Vengeance* will be followed in February by *Seeker: Faith & Corruption*, a two-issue miniseries.

In December (see this month's listings), look for Bob Hickey's *Blood & Roses: Future Past Tense* in full color! This two-issue miniseries is pencilled by AC fan favorite and Eclipse's *Parts Unknown* artist, Brad Gorby! Gorb's females will literally knock your socks off! Two women, one from the past and one from the future, are brought together by the mysterious Time-Lords to make a deadly combination that will lead you on a rollercoaster ride through the timestream. This will be followed by *Blood & Roses: Search For The Timestone* in March by Jerry Smith, Bob Hickey and Gene Gonzales! These issues feature fully painted covers by Daerick (*Batman, Necroscope*) Gross!

January's hot to "rot" with Tom and Mary Bierbaum's full color miniseries, *Dead Kid*! That's right! He's dead, but he's not down! Morty Coyle's life couldn't get any better when he's gifted with a magic talisman that animates his suddenly murdered body so that he can rise from the grave to track down his murderers. He's in his teens, he skateboards, he eats fries, he stares at girls and listens to rock & roll. "It's like Transylvania 90210," says co-creator and DC's *Legionnaires* scribe, Tom Bierbaum. "Or Archie Comics does Deadworld," adds, wife and fellow *Legionnaires* writer, Mary. Miss it, and miss out.

Also, in January, look for *Ashley Dust* in full color by former *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* illustrator, Rick McCollum! It's fantastic metaphysical adventure at its finest as Ashley must face up against the combined forces of hell and the damned. Guest appearances by Robert E. Howard, H.P. Lovecraft, L. Ron Hubbard, Aleister Crowley and the Ayatollah Khomeini. What more could you possibly want? Cyborgs? Nymphs? Aliens? Dinosaurs? We've got that, too. Stop by and pick it up.

With pros like Daerick Gross, Tom and Mary Bierbaum, Keith Giffen, Lurene Haines, Dave Dorman, Don Hillsman, Rick McCollum, Franchesco, and more working for us, can you think of an excuse not to buy Sky Comics? We didn't think so. Check us out. Tell your retailer to order bunches.

Triumphant News

The Triumphant Unleashed Crossover

The *Triumphant Unleashed* crossover will be Triumphant's first major crossover event and will involve all of its titles published in November and December of 1993. This crossover will feature the debut of two new on-

going monthly titles and will be an integral part of the ongoing Triumphant storyline. Several concepts are being tied together to make this event special, including interlocking front covers, interlocking back covers, a special interlocking centerspread poster, and more.

"We believe this is the first time in the history of crossovers and comics publishing," says Adam Post, President of Triumphant, "that people who read an entire crossover story will be able to read *and afford to purchase* all the comics in that universe -- the Triumphant universe -- and be eager to continue purchasing the entire universe of titles. Limited to eight monthly titles, the Triumphant universe is 'The Collector's Universe' and the only *affordable* universe!"

The *Triumphant Unleashed* story will involve all the Triumphant characters as a natural progression of the Triumphant universe's continuity. The story revolves around the events that happened in the past and reveals the way in which Doctor Chaos and the other residents of Pathos manipulate events in the universe.

"The *Triumphant Unleashed* crossover is an important landmark in Triumphant history. Within this crossover, the essential nature of the Triumphant universe and the meaning of the cameo appearances of Doctor Chaos and Mr. Death will be revealed," says Post. "Although each issue is a story unto itself, the whole picture painted across these issues covers a history of over 250 years playing itself out to a single decisive moment engineered by Doctor Chaos. The history of this very real fictional universe is about to unfold."

When the readers complete the *Triumphant Unleashed* story, an exciting, ever-changing universe awaits them. By the summer of 1994, the Triumphant universe will be in full swing with eight titles a month. Triumphant characters are constantly changing and evolving as time goes on just as people do in real life.

The first month of the *Triumphant Unleashed* crossover is November 1993. The titles are:

Triumphant Unleashed #0
Doctor Chaos #1
Prince Vandal #1
Riot Gear #3
Scavengers #5
The Chromium Man #4

The second month of *Triumphant Unleashed* is December 1993. The titles are:

Doctor Chaos #2
Prince Vandal #2
Riot Gear #4
Scavengers #6
The Chromium Man #5
Triumphant Unleashed #1

"You'll notice there are no chapter numbers on our books. The books in the crossover will feature a special extra *Triumphant Unleashed* logo. These comics stand alone as enjoyable reading and you don't have to buy each one to appreciate any single one. The crossover will make sense to everybody. We have a regular policy of having self-contained enjoyable stories in each of our comics. Anyone who buys a Triumphant comic will get a great story with great art that is part of an enormous interwoven tapestry of literature," says Publisher Eric Shefferman.

Triumphant Unleashed #0 will be a 32-page comic, with 16 pages of story and art and eight pages of additional text and art about the Triumphant universe. There will also be a 16-page giveaway format shipping free to retailers as a thank you to those who supported the line early on. Triumphant expects to ship between 30,000-50,000 giveaway copies free to retailers.

"The center spreads of all twelve issues in the *Triumphant Unleashed* crossover will combine to form a poster image titled *The Meeting* for our industry's first-ever 'Non-Crossover-Crossover' featuring Defiant's War Dancer and Triumphant's Doctor chaos, illustrated by Alan Weiss and Greg Fox; Jim Shooter came up with the 'Non-Crossover-Crossover' concept himself -- only he could!" states Post. "*The Meeting* depicts the meeting of War Dancer and Doctor Chaos and will not be presented as an integral part of the *Triumphant Unleashed* storyline. We're going to let the readers figure this one out for themselves; suffice it to say it's 'Beyond the Imaginary Limits.' War Dancer will make his first appearance in one of the twelve interlocking center

spreads in the *Triumphant Unleashed* crossover. We won't say which." *War Dancer #1* launches in January 1994 from Defiant as a new monthly title (co-created, pencilled and written by Alan Weiss, co-created by Jim Shooter). *Doctor Chaos #1* launches in November 1993 from Triumphant as a new monthly title (pencilled by Greg Fox, written by John Riley, co-created by Adam Post, Eric Shefferman and John Riley).

Win-Mill News

Win-Mill Has Cerebus

As part of Cerebus Campaign '93's finale, Win-Mill Productions will publish the first issue of *The Cerebus Companion*, a magazine that will take an analytical look at arguably the greatest comic book series ever.

Companion, which has been authorized by Dave Sim, creator of Cerebus, will first concentrate on the early years of the series, including the "Cerebus the Barbarian" and "High Society" storylines. The controversies, the constant uphill battles, and the influences -- including Steve Gerber's *Howard the Duck* and Barry Smith's *Conan*, to name just a couple -- will all be highlighted.

Parody is one of the mainstays of *Cerebus*. The book has managed to poke fun at subjects as diverse as Margaret Thatcher, Alan Moore's writing and Michael Moorcock's *Elric*. But no one has recounted the times when Cerebus has been on the *receiving* end of parody. *The Cerebus Companion* will have a full report.

A few other features round out the first issue. One is an extensively illustrated checklist of Dave Sim's work from 1976 to present. "People who think Dave has produced nothing but issues of *Cerebus* are going to be amazed," said *Companion* editor Craig Miller. "There's a huge amount of other material by publishers as varied as Fantagraphics, Starlog, Rip-Off Press, Epic, Warren, Eclipse, Marvel and a host of obscure publishers long since forgotten. We'll list them all, giving complete details of each publication."

The first issue will also include a rare interview with dave from the "High Society" days, where he speaks out not only on the post-High Society storyline (with a surprising direction planned) but other then-future projects as well (remember the *Cerebus* animated films and record albums?).

The Cerebus Companion is being produced by Craig Miller and John Thorne, co-editors of *Wrapped in Plastic*, a bi-monthly *Twin Peaks*-related magazine. December will also see the release of that magazine's eighth issue, which will feature interviews with *Twin Peaks* co-creator Mark Frost and "Killer Bob" Frank Silva.

SCOTT'S Blazing TOP TEN

Comic Gimmick Failures

10. Chromium UPC code comic,

9. The all cover comic,

8. The invisible comic,

7. Shredded Jessica Hahn comic,

6. *Faust* comic polybagged in blood,

5. *FemForce* edible comic,

4. *Avengers* audio comic narrated by Steven Urkel,

3. Braille comic,

2. Radioactive comic,

1. No Gimmick Whatsoever!

Industry News

Spawn Crossover Rescinded

The *Spawn/ Valeria She-Bat* crossover anticipated to appear in *Valeria.She-Bat* #3 and #4 has been cancelled. A new press release from Beau Smith, who's operating Todd's publicity, states that McFarlane is pulling out from the project "due to lateness in the production of the book." Evidently, McFarlane sensed that the Spawn-Valeria crossover -- which has not yet shipped from Continuity -- would intervene with the successfulness of his upcoming Spawn-Batman crossover.

Continuity, on the other hand, will re-solicit both books at a future date, denoting that they should ship about the same time as *Valeria She-Bat* #6 and #7. However, all testimonials -- both artistic and written -- to McFarlane's Spawn will be modified in, or removed from, the concluding books. No, it won't technically be a *Spawn* crossover, but the volumes will be printed.

Claremont Goes Creator-Owned DC Style

Chris Claremont -- whose 17-year run on Marvel's *Uncanny X-Men* set the standard by which all modern day superhero team books are judged -- will bring *Sovereign 7*, his first major creator-owned project, to DC Comics sometime in 1994.

The series chronicles the adventures of seven original characters, all of whom are described by the publisher as "survivors of extra-dimensional worlds who have become marooned on Earth." Chasing them across the cosmos is a villain so powerful that her very existence threatens to destroy all of creation.

According to Claremont, *Sovereign 7* "will appeal to comics readers, having enough power, resonance and meaning for adult and young readers. After all, the best fantasy I read as a kid still has the power to move me as an adult."

Dwayne (*Wolverine*) Turner is slated to pencil the book, which will be edited by "Titans Universe" editor, Rob Simpson. Also on tap from Claremont (and DC Comics): Two new *Superman* graphic novels (release dates to be announced), and an adaptation of *First Flight*, Claremont's first full-length prose novel from Berkley/ Ace.

SkyBox And DC Join Forces

SkyBox International Inc. and DC Comics announced a new three-year, exclusive licensing agreement that will enable licensing agreement that will enable SkyBox to produce trading card products featuring all of DC's comic characters.

A crucial change in the new agreement between DC and SkyBox and their previous relationship is that SkyBox will be able to include *Batman* and other related characters in their trading cards, starting in 1994. The card licence for *Batman* is currently with Topps, but that agreement expires on December 31, 1993, so SkyBox can then have access to all the DC characters.

The announcement was made by SkyBox President Frank O'Connell at the 1993 Chicago ComiCon, and expands on the existing licensing relationship that the two companies have had since 1991, along with Warner Bros. Consumer Products.

"SkyBox, Warner Bros. Consumer Products and DC Comics are committed to a synergistic marketing plan," said O'Connell. "Our plan will bring to the market unique collectible products featuring DC Comics' characters that will not only prove popular to consumers, but will also drive interest in other DC Comics products, including comic books, feature films and television shows. Towards that end, we will be accelerating our DC licensed product releases and targeting them to the varied DC Comics fan base."

During the announcement O'Connell also mentioned that some upcoming DC products include a special *The Return of Superman* trading card series, and a premium Master Series

card line featuring artwork and characters from the Vertigo imprint.

Caliber Press Combines with Stabur

Caliber Press, the independent publisher of creator owned titles, has announced that as of September 1, 1993, it will be merging with the Stabur Corporation. Gary Reed, owner and publisher of Caliber Press will stay on as publisher of Caliber and also assume the role of publisher for all of Stabur Corporation. Paul Burke, corporate president of Stabur, will retain his position and Caliber will become one of the subsidiaries of Stabur Corporation and will move over to join Stabur at the corporate offices, bringing over all operations and titles to Stabur.

There will be no change in status at this point with Caliber's titles and their relationship with creators. "At this stage," said Publisher Gary Reed, "all operations will essentially stay the same on the creative end of Caliber. We don't foresee any drastic changes in the future either. Paul and I see eye to eye on what Caliber Press is and what it is trying to accomplish."

"As far as the direct market is concerned," said President Paul Burke, "they will see little, if any, changes in Caliber Press," except he noted, "we'll probably be upgrading the production quality and will increase the advertising budget to give Caliber Press more of a presence in the marketplace."

Marvel Motion Denied

The motion by Marvel Comics Limited for a preliminary injunction in a lawsuit which sought to prevent rival Defiant from using the title *Warriors of Plasm* was denied on Sept. 30th in a ruling by Judge Michael B. Mukasey, United States District Court, Southern District in Manhattan.

The lawsuit charging trademark infingement was filed in August by Marvel against Defiant, the six-month old start-up comic brainchild of Jim Shooter. Marvel's lawsuit maintained that the name *Warriors of Plasm* infringed on its alleged trademark rights, first claimed in the United Kingdom for a character, Plasmer.

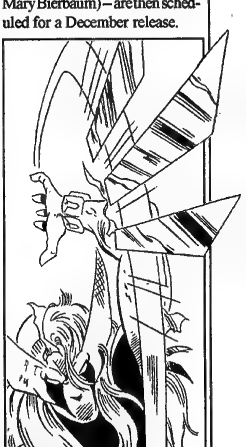
Jim Shooter, president and editor-in-chief of Defiant, said, "This is a clear cut vindication of our position in this case. We knew we had not infringed upon their title. Obviously, we are thrilled with the judge's ruling."

The first offering from Shooter's new company, *Warriors of Plasm* #1, captured approximately two percent of the market in August.

Sky Comics Colors Its World

After testing the black and white waters, Sky Comics has decided to make a colorful splash with *Seeker: Vengeance* #1, their first ever full-color comic book, written by Joe Martin, and drawn by Willie Peppers and Allen Freeman. This title from Sky Comics has gathered a lot of distributor approval, gaining previews and interviews in nearly every major catalogue. "We're going all or nothing," announced Seeker creator/ writer Joe Martin. "Sky believed that *Seeker* was the title that was most eagerly anticipated by fans and a good representation on what to look for from this new company." The first of two issues will ship on or around November 10th.

Two more full color titles -- *Blood & Roses: Future Past Tense* #1 and *Dead Kid* (by Tom and Mary Bierbaum) -- are then scheduled for a December release.



Foundation Studios Becomes Publisher

Foundation Studios, the production company that was producing U.N. Force, U.N. Force Files, Tekq and Paradigm for Caliber Press, is now Foundation Comics. Brent Dorian Carpenter, the co-creator and principal writer, will now serve as Foundation's acting publisher.

According to Carpenter, the Comic Glut of 1993 forced Caliber to suspend publication of their titles, "however, our new company has just successfully negoti-

ated with the K-Mart Corporation to place our current titles and several upcoming ones through their 2,250 stores worldwide." Carpenter added, "Our projected print run is now 60,000 copies."

The tentative launch date for Foundation Comics is February, 1994. All of their titles will start fresh from the beginning, giving them the opportunity to make dramatic improvements in the product, "particularly in the area of production standards," Carpenter continued, "We have hired a graphic design firm to help us make any technical improvements, most notably in the area of color separations, where problems plagued our earlier issues."

Foundation Comics intends to continue to offer their titles through comic retail shops as well so that they remain accessible to mainstream collectors.

Diamond Keeping Busy

On June 18, representatives from American Airlines Cargo visited Diamond's Home Offices in Baltimore to present the company with a very special award.

The award -- a minutely-detailed alabaster rendering of a bald eagle preparing to land, mounted on a marble base -- recognizes the successful partnership in freight handling which has been developing between Diamond and American over recent years.

"We are very proud that American has honored us with this award," said Diamond Vice-President of Operations Cindy Sherwin. "We are delighted at the way our business partnership has flourished over the years, and I'm sure that relationship will only continue to improve in the future."

American National Accounts Representative Krista McGlen, Chicago Accounts Representative Stella Sienicki, and New York Accounts Representative Ray Beckles presented the trophy, which is on display in the main lobby of the Home Office.

Also, during Upper Deck's All-Star FanFest (which ran for five days preceding the 1993 All-Star Game at Baltimore's Oriole Park at Camden yards on July 13), Diamond collected $13,110.61 inn donations to benefit Baltimore Reads, Inc., a non-profit pro-literacy organization.

An estimated 115,000 baseball fans converged on the Baltimore Convention Center and Festival Hall for the FanFest, where Diamond set up a booth to offer attendees sample comics and non-sports trading cards -- and to photograph fans with DC Comics' Batman and Marvel Comics' Spider-Man -- in exchange for donations.

Each fan also received a list of comic shops in the Baltimore area, directing them to even more comics, cards, and collectibles.

Marvel, DC, SkyBox, and Topps donated over 100,000 comics and cards to Diamond for the event, and more than two dozen employees from Diamond's Home Office in nearby Timonium volunteered time during their off-hours to staff the booth throughout the FanFest's five-day run.

Diamond Director of Marketing Roger Fletcher applauded all of the people and organizations who made Diamond's part in the FanFest so successful. "Our suppliers were generous in donating comics and cards to help us expose them to a new audience while raising money for a very worthwhile and pertinent cause.

"I'd also like to thank all of the Diamond employees who volunteered their free time during the evenings and weekends to help raise donations at the booth," Fletcher added.

Conceived in 1988 as a non-profit partnership between the City of Baltimore and the United Way of Central Maryland, Baltimore Reads, Inc. maintains and develops an integrated system of literacy programs built around helping adults master necessary functional living skills.

Diamond's relationship with Baltimore Reads began when the organization exhibited at the 1992 Retailers Seminar in Baltimore, sharing ideas with retailers on how to become involved with pro-literacy programs in their communities.

"All of us are very proud to be associated with Baltimore Reads," Fletcher said. "Considering that this donation to a local organization came largely from people visiting Baltimore from all over the country, it's evident that literacy isn't just a local concern, but one that's relevant to everyone everywhere."

In other news, Diamond President and CEO Steve Geppi has won the coveted 1993 Entrepreneur of the Year award in the category of Wholesale/Distribution for the Maryland region.

"I am thrilled and gratified by my selection," Geppi said after winning on June 24. "This honor reflects the successful efforts of everyone at Diamond. It also reflects the tremendous success of the entire comics industry, which I'll be promoting vigorously using the publicity generated by this award."

A total of seventeen finalists competed for the honor of Maryland Entrepreneur of the Year in six different Entrepreneur categories: High Technology, Master, Retail, Socially Responsible, Turnaround, and Wholesale/Distribution. (Geppi competed directly against two other finalists in his category.) eight awards

were distributed in the six categories, as there were two winners in the High Technology and Socially Responsible categories.

Geppi will now compete against other regional winners for the National title, which will be awarded during the seventh annual Entrepreneur of the Year Conference, November 19-21. At that time, he will also be inducted into the Entrepreneur of the Year Institute in Palm Springs, CA.

The National Entrepreneur of the Year will be the subject of *Inc.* Magazine's December cover story.

The prestigious award -- established to celebrate the achievements and promote the benefits of American entrepreneurs -- is sponsored in 40 cities nationwide by Ernst & Young Entrepreneurial Services, *Inc.* Magazine, Merrill Lynch Business Financial Services, Inc., and in Maryland by *Warfield's Business Record.*

Capital City Makes Plans For Advance Comics

Capital City Distribution Inc.'s *Advance Comics* has gone bats in October. For Halloween, it's featuring one of the most popular monsters among horror aficionados, vampires.

In the comics section, Dark Horse presents *Dracula* in its *Universal Monsters* series which is based on the classic horror movies from the Golden Age of Hollywood. DC offers *Scarlett*; Harris, the *Vampirella* trade paperback; Malibu, *Necroscope II: Wamphyri*; and Marvel, *Morbius Revisited* and the irresistible *X-Men vs. Dracula.* Rebel Studios coughs up lots of blood-curdling action with *Gunfighters from Hell*, while Topps presents the improbable duel in *Dracula vs. Zorro.*

There are also new titles from Acid Rain, including the *Vampire Bikini Calendar* in Comics Wall Art, and Darque Studios. The video section provides the monthly additions to the *Dark Shadows* series, both the 60s original and the 90s remake. In addition, there's the new release from the Golden Age of Universal Pictures horror movies, *House of Dracula*; "The Vampire Top Ten," a historical retrospective of the top neck-bite classics, including the F.W. Murnau *Nosferatu*; the classic 1931 Tod Browning-Bela Lugosi *Dracula*; *Dracula's Daughter* and *Son of Dracula*; the first two Hammer Dracula pictures, *Horror of Dracula* and *Brides of Dracula*; and much more.

The media section features books by the toothsome Anne Rice, including *Lasher* and *The Vampire Companion.* There are also relists of two fine picture books, *Dracula: The Vampire Legend on Film* and *Vintage Monster Movies.*

Not about to roll over and die, both the novelty and game sections feature plenty of vampire offerings as well.

In novelties, there's the *Vampires Are Forever* t-shirt, based on the print of the same name; three exquisite vinyl model kits from Horizon based on Bram Stoker's *Dracula*; and a kit from Screamin' based on Lon Chaney's vampire from *London After Midnight.*

One of the most popular genres in games is one that allows players to actually play vampires. White Wolf's *Vampire: The Masquerade* role-playing game is the undisputed leader of the genre. Other games include *Fury of Dracula* by Games Workshop, a board game pitting three vampire hunters against the Count himself. Steve Jackson Games presents a relisting of *Gurps Vampire: The Masquerade*, while TSR provides a wealth of products associated with the *Ravenloft* setting.

And let's not forget trading cards. Fantaco puts artist Tim Bradstreet's realistic style and nightmarish subject matter into a new boxed card set called Night Tribes, a tour of a world where post-punk vampires roam deso-

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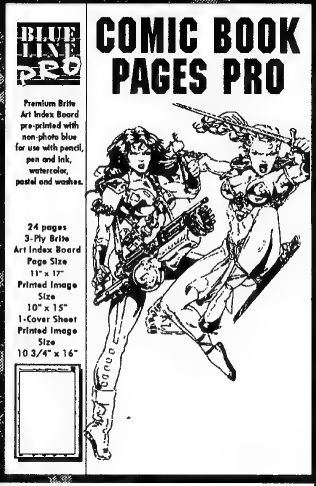
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late and forbidding cityscapes. Friedlander Publishing, Imagine, Inc., and Shel-Tone also feature sets of macabre cards.

Capital also celebrates *Advance Comics* fifth anniversary with the December issue (#60).

"This is an exciting time for Capital City Distribution," said Connie Woolpert Koury, vice president of sales and marketing for Capital City Distribution. "The fifth anniversary issue will be kicking off a year of innovation that will keep *AC* the favorite among fans and retailers for years to come."

The December issue represents another first in a long line of firsts for Capital City Distribution. *AC* was the first consumer magalog for the direct market, the first magalog to feature color, and the first to include promo items. In the annual *Comics Buyers' Guide* fan poll, *AC* was voted the favorite magalog.

"*AC* consistently has listed a wider and deeper breadth of products than competing publications, creating a well-deserved reputation as the most comprehensive magalog available to the direct market," Koury said.

To celebrate the event, *AC*'s December issue will be printed on high-quality paper throughout, with special glossy cover stock; will include editorial features looking at the last five years of *AC* and comics in general, and will have at least a half-dozen promo items in the bagged consumer edition.

Characters from the DC *Sandman* series and the Marvel *Incredible Hulk* series will be on the covers of the December issue. Koury said each publisher agreed to commission special artwork.

The bagged consumer edition will include a Magnus/Nexus crossover promo comic from Valiant; a poster of the never-before-seen cross-section of the planet Plasm from Defiant; a special *Sandman* checklist from DC; an Ultraverse *Breakthru* card from Malibu, and a Comics' Greatest World card in support of Dark Horse licensed-cards from Topps.

Jae Lee will create a special piece of artwork that will be published exclusively in the December *AC* as a pull-out poster. The poster features Lee's hot new series, *Hellshock*, which will debut in December. In addition, Lee will visit one randomly selected *AC* outlet on the day *Hellshock* arrives from Capital City Distribution. The fifth anniversary issue also will include a special pull-out poster featuring every cover to have appeared on *AC*.

New Comic Plays to Music Fans

Advertisers and businesses looking to reach an untapped audience have a new vehicle in the form of *Rock-It Comix*, the first fully authorized comic magazine that features stories based on -- and driven by -- current musical stars, as well as legendary names from rock 'n roll history. Heralded as an entirely new medium for musical artists, the magazine is an ambitious joint publishing and marketing venture by Malibu Comics Entertainment, Inc., Gold Mountain Entertainment, Inc., and International Strategic Marketing, Inc. Already, *Rock-It Comix* has drawn the interest of a wide spectrum of business interests who seek new ways to reach the ever-important demographic: young adults, age 18 to 34.

"We are creating a vehicle that will tap directly into a market segment that has grown more difficult to reach," says John Anderson, President of ISM. "Traditional music magazines have grown older with their readers. Teen magazines are geared toward a much younger group, with a focus on females. *Rock-It Comix* hits young adults right where they live: through their music."

Rock-It Comix will provide many opportunities to reach that reader through advertising, inserts, special promotions, sweepstakes and contests. A hybrid magazine, each issue will feature an illustrated story and can include a mix of photos, interviews and fan letters -- all in a full-sized magazine format. Magazines will be marketed around the world like an album or music video, with direct sales at concerts (as a complement or replacement for show programs) and by mail order; via distribution to major record and video chains, music instrument stores and music retailers, and college book stores; and through Warner Publisher Services, Inc., which handles distribution to traditional newsstands, specialty retail stores and mass market chains. Driven by a global distribution system, *Rock-It Comix* will appear in markets around the world.

Adding to *Rock-It Comix* creative and marketing potential are licensing agreements with the two largest music merchandising companies on the planet, Winterland Productions and Brockum. In addition, the magazines offer a perfect vehicle for targeted promotions, such as guitar give-aways, fan-oriented contests and sweepstakes, or specific tour promotions. As a result, the sales potential for each magazine will far surpass any traditional comic book.

"Bands have never had this kind of promotional tool before,"

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says Jack Jacobs, *Rock-It Comix* Acquisitions Director. "It's a great way for a group of artists to create a name, establish an identity or build a strong following that extends beyond the arena or a video."

Comic books are read by all ages -- from 6 to over 40 years -- and comic book buyers are among the most active consumers in a wide range of markets. By themselves, comics are hot. In the United States alone, the comic book market has grown dramatically in the past few years, and is now a $600 million/year business. In Europe, the market is about double that size. And, in Japan, where 1/3 of all books sold are comics, comic magazines and graphic novels, the market is worth in excess of $2 billion.

"For the first time in decades, the comic book industry is expanding its horizons to the general marketplace in terms of the variety of material it can publish," says *Rock-It Comix* Editor, Robert V. Conte. "Music-related comics such as ours will be among the most successful. The music industry is one of the largest businesses in the entertainment industry. Comics based in this field can only help increase comic book readership in a market, that before, hardly recognized the industry's potential."

To be introduced at the San Diego Comic Convention in August 1993, the first titles are scheduled for release beginning in November. Since they represent a whole new breed of comic magazine, they are sure to become collectors' items. The initial titles include *Metallica* (a three-issue retrospective), and *World Domination* (the story about the trials and tribulations of the alternative record label battling the system). They will be followed by a December release of *Ozzy Osbourne* and *Lita Ford* (both single issues). Subsequent months will see the release of *Megadeth* and *Pantera* comic magazines. Other issues currently in production but with no release dates include *Anthrax, Black Sabbath, The Doors* (a four-issue retrospective), *Naughty By Nature, Pharcyde, P.M. Dawn, Primus, Smithereens, Soundgarden* and *Yes.*

Rock-It Comix will not be limited to rock 'n roll or heavy metal acts. Additional areas targeted for development include pop, alternative music, hip-hop, rap, classics and country. To ensure that each magazine will have a style, look and story that reflects the musical artist's personal desires, they will participate in and approve all aspects of the production of their magazine, including selection of the artists, writers and storylines.

"*Rock-It Comix* really put the artist in control," states Gold Mountain President, Ron Stone. "It really gives them a chance to communicate directly with their fans in new and exciting ways."

Rock-It Comix will be priced at a standard $3.95. Special serialized issues, first editions and limited edition issues also will be published periodically and will be priced up to $25.

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COMICS NOW

by Jerry Smith

This month I want to take a look at some worthwhile but overlooked mainstream stuff, along with some small press books.

Icon, from Milestone Media, is a great comic. The only Milestone books that looked interesting enough for me to pick up when the company was launched were *Hardware* and this book. I didn't care much for *Hardware*, but *Icon*, despite the "black Superman" label bestowed on the title by some critics, is a different look at a super character.

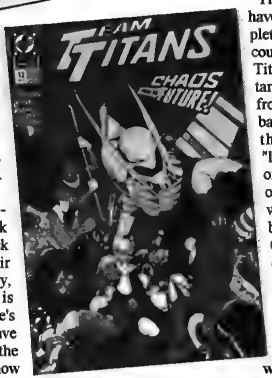
Icon is Augustus Freeman IV, an alien who crashed to earth in the deep south in 1839. The alien creature automatically assumed the shape of the first native he met, a slave. In 1993, Augustus has become a rich, conservative businessman. Raquel Ervin, a young black woman from the projects, accidently discovers Freeman has super powers, so she convinces him to put on a cool costume and be a hero. He even makes Raquel his "sidekick" at her insistance. Her sidekick name is "Rocket."

This book is different for many reasons. It's fun to read about a black conservative, just because very few black conservatives manage to make their voices heard in the media. Secondly, while Icon might be able to fly, is invunerable, and has super strength, he's nothing like Superman. He doesn't have years of crime-busting experience like the Man of Steel, and he doesn't always know the right thing to do. Once, while trying to intervene in a hostage situation, the police mistook Icon for one of the bad guys, a problem obviously arising soley from his skin tone. It gave him, and the readers, a lot to think about.

While racism is dealt with in the book, it springs naturally from the plots and is not pushed down the reader's throat. Writer Dwayne McDuffie is concerned with telling a story, not advancing an agenda. McDuffie has explored Freeman's character (a subplot I hope he investigates often), how Icon deals with other Milestone characters (most notably the Blood Syndicate in *Icon* #5 and #6), and the fact that Raquel, Rocket, is pregnant. This isn't the stuff of other mainstream comics; when was the last time Nita of the *New Mutants* took an on-camera home pregnancy test?

Icon is topical, hot, and heroic. Check it out.

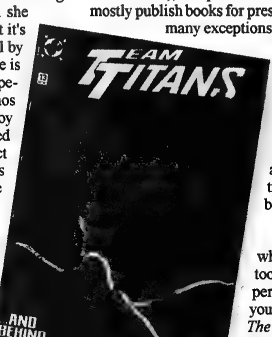
I used to believe the only person capable of writing *Teen Titans* stories was Marv Wolfman. Wolfman is still writing *The Titans* and doing a wonderful job, but newcomer Jeff Jensen, with penciller Phil Jimenez, has taken over the *Titans* spinoff book, *Team Titans*, and they have succeeded in changing my mind.



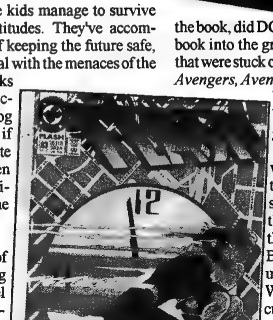
The "Team Titans" have always been complete opposites of their counterparts the Teen Titans. The Team Titans are young heroes from the future, sent back to the past by the mysterious "leader" with scads of other teams in order to save the world from that evil baddie, Lord Chaos. They're characters who succeeded in their mission, but altered their future so irrevocably their present world isn't the one they came from

All of the Team members have had trouble adjusting. Take Battalion, the team's red-maned trainer and leader. In his world, he was a concert pianist married to a broadway star. He looked her

up in this time, only to find that not only had she never heard of him, she was married to someone else. Or Redwing, a beautiful redhead with huge red wings attached to her back. All she wants is to be a normal teenager, but it's kind of tough when you get to school by flying under your own power. Mirage is perhaps the saddest case. A shape-changer, she was raised by Lord Chaos in the future to be the ultimate sex toy for his troops. She is not only haunted by those memories, but also the fact that she was in love with her era's version of Dick Grayson, only to come back and find out our Grayson was, again, happily in love with someone else; Starfire of the Titans. When the future Dick Grayson finally makes it to our era, following the Titans, he is horribly corrupted from Nightwing the crime fighter into Deathwing the psycho hose-beast. He brutally attacks Mirage and leaves her in shock, possibly pregnant.



Despite all this, these kids manage to survive with fairly positive attitudes. They've accomplished their mission of keeping the future safe, now they just have to deal with the menaces of the present. The Titans books have always balanced action with snappy dialog and characterazation, if Marv Wolfman can't write everything, then Jensen and Jimenez are definitely the ones to take the torch on *Team Titans*.



Whenever friends of mine catch me whining about the latest Marvel crossover or dumb storyline, they always criticize me for being too old for comics. It's time to prove them wrong. Every time I point out how sophomoric and bland most of Marvel's line is, especially books like *Spectacular Spider-Man*, *Fantastic Four*, *Thor*, and *Captain America*, friends of mine who like those books say, "You're getting too old for superheroes. All you like is *Watchmen*, *Dark Knight*, *Hellblazer*, all of the top of the line stuff. You don't have any tolerance for a good old-fashioned superhero story." Not true. Look at the books I've reviewed so far; both fine titles, but hardly *Watchmen* caliber. Whereas DC, Dark Horse and other companies write for all ages (especially if they have a brain), companies like Marvel and Image mostly publish books for preschoolers. There are many exceptions at both companies, but if you want nothing more than a rock 'em sock 'em superhero yarn, DC delivers intelligently. Marvel writes for illerates, and the more prison time they've done, the better.

So, all you critics who think I've gotten too old for a decent superhero tale, how do you explain my love for *The Flash*? Face it, DC treats almost all of its books like gold. When Flash's previous writer, Bill Messner-Loebs, left the book, did DC get Mr. Anyhack to drive the book into the ground with bad art and storylines that were stuck on automatic (*Namor, Dr. Strange, Avengers, Avengers West Coast, Iron Man*, etc.)? No. They put Mark Waid on the book, and a good title has become great.

First thing Waid did as writer was to bring back Barry Allen as the Flash. "But he's dead!" you say. Well ... kind of. After one of the finest multi-issue storylines of the past few years, the mystery of Barry Allen returning as the Flash unfolded to a satisfing conclusion. Waid then took Wally West, the current Flash, into situations like fighting super secret organizations and dealing with past lovers with super powers.

Wally is constantly discovering who he is and what his role is in the universe. Each issue he becomes more of a three-dimensional, human character. Oh, and he puts on red tights, runs really fast, and fights supervillains in gaudy costumes who vow to take over the world. See, Marvel, it can be done right.

I'd like to take the time to talk about a few of the smaller press comics sent in for review.

Razor #3 from London Night Studios is another crazed-anti-hero-with-blades-as-weapons book.

This time, the protagonist is a woman, sort of like a female Faust. It's extremely violent, the dialog is trite and unsophisticated, and the art could be a lot better. I wouldn't pay my own money for it, but it's not a terrible book. If you like splatter books and movies, this might be for you. By the way, the backup story in this book--it didn't have a title, that probably would have been too much work for the writer, who doesn't seem to enjoy using his brain--wins the prize for worst backup story of all time. The story makes absolutely no sense, and I defy anyone to explain it to me. It's an excuse for unprofessional writer and artist to see some work in print. I don't mind sex or violence in a story, but make it coherent, would you?

Two books from Triumphant had different results. *The Chromium Man*, by John Riley and Adam Pollina, is about a man who was in an elite organization called Riot Guard. Retired to a farm planet, Kaanar finds a quiet life of peace with his wife. When a contingent of Riot Gear arrives on his paradise planet to put down honest protesters, Kaanar's wife Laayana among them, he comes out of retirement to stop the intolerant and deadly plantetary troops. This is a fun book with an engaging storyline and fine art. I read the ashcan edition of this one, I'm looking forward to the regular series.

The other Triumphant book I've seen is *Scavengers*. Despite excellent art by Franchesco, the story by Jarrod Post jumps around too much. It seems to be about a group of space faring garbage collectors, but not much is clear from this first issue. There are too many characters in too many different settings and too much happening at one time. Very confusing.

The less said about Spoof Comics' The Silver Sweetie, the better. This one-shot (thank God) spoof of the Silver Surfer is a female herald of Gal-Aktus (get it?). The parody of this book is about as sharp as a bowling ball. Here are a few sample paragraphs:

"She found herself working as a procurer for that world destroying bimbo, Gal-Aktus. But what the hell, the pay was good, The hours, however, sucked.

She was seperated from her rad surfer dude, Balla-Doll. Now she searches ceaselessly for him whenever she's not helping to destroy whole civilizations in the name of her dreaded mistress.

Call her killer.

Call her bitchin'.

Call her SILVER SWEETIE."

Can anyone get a comic published these days?

A Conversation With...

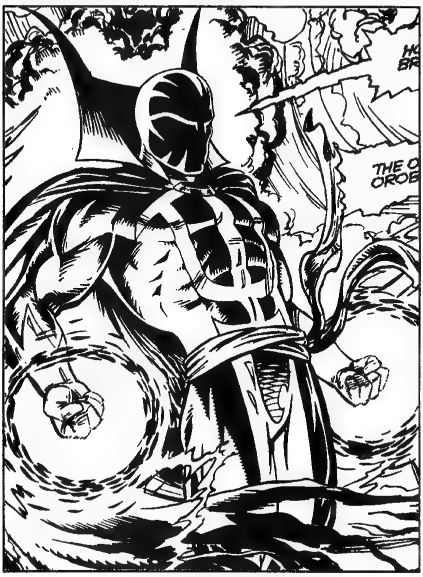
David Quinn

by Joe Martin

"To start at the begining," David Quinn, who is perhaps best known for his writing on *Faust* for Rebel Studios, smiles, "what can I say? *Dr. Strange* was always a long-time favorite book of mine. There's a lot of comics I don't follow as closely as I'd like, mainly because I've been writing comics, but *Doc Strange* was one of the first things for me. I can remember doing specific chores and begging my mother for money so that I could go get the latest Steve Englehart, Frank Brunner, Gene Colan issues."

"I had the opportunity to meet Stan Lee." Quinn says this as if that alone were enough, but then continues. "I talked to him about the Silver Surfer, another favorite of mine, and Doc Strange. Strange intrigued us both because he just has this grungy, human side to him, but out of that he also became... cosmic. To us, that was even more interesting and fantastic than the Silver Surfer... Surfer's god-like all the time, y'know."

Quinn paused. "Strange is a damaged, messed-up, arrogant little person that has... *ascended* towards the stars... and that's where I come in."



"You'll be taking over the writing chores?" I asked.

"Yeah," he replies, sounding anticipatory, like a person who is expecting something great to happen. "I had no idea that Dr. Strange was up for grabs at all. They were auditioning writers and I approached Marvel because I wanted to write *Morbius*. I always loved Blade, too, and I wanted to maybe get that but... I don't know, I just love those dark situation-type things and especially placing human beings in these situations. I think it's really interesting... fighting for the light in the middle of the darkness, and if you've ever read *Faust* then you know what that's all about, too. I was introduced to Bobbie Chase in San Diego by my agent, Sharon Cho, who convinced me to submit to Marvel even though the few times I had, I hadn't made any headway. The editors up there didn't know who I was, I guess, " Quinn chuckles.

"Let me guess," I intervened. "Bobbie Chase recognized your name."

"Exactly," he replied. "Bobbie was honest. She liked my samples but they were totally wrong for the direction Blade and Morbius were going in. However, she knew Evan Scolnick had an opening on *Doctor Strange*. There I was, all of a sudden, with *Doctor Strange* handed to me. It was incredible -- more than I had hoped for, really."

"Life can be pleasant sometimes."

"Yeah, it can. It was right at the time where they had achieved what they wanted with Strange

and that was to bring the book into the 'Midnight Sons' line. That all culminates in October when the 'Midnight Sons' line identifies itself much closer and tightens its own continuity. It's going to get its own trade dress similar to DC's Vertigo titles."

"So," I asked, "what direction will you be heading in?"

"Well, I'll be playing with all the characters involved with the Midnight Sons in some way because Doc has a relationship with all of them. These titles are going to become pretty tightly woven from what I've experienced so far. I'm not going so much in a new direction with Doc as it is a 'roots' direction. For me, I think it's wrong to pretend that the old Doc never existed. He did exist. I'd rather throw him into a new crisis and see how he reacts when he gets stripped down to the bone and really has to prove who he is. Doctor Strange does not need me to come up with a new character for him," finalized Quinn. "What he needs is for me to come up with new stories for him and tell *his* kind of stories. To explore him to the best of my ability. If anything, my direction will go inward."

"It's true," I felt it necessary to comment, "that Doc Strange is 'rich in flavor' sort of like Maxwell House coffee."

David Quinn didn't pause for a moment, as many have, who weren't ready for my sometimes bizarre remarks. "Very true. You can probably tell that I've been thinking about this a lot by the way I'm talking. I'm having a lot of fun."

"Writing comics is fun," I threw in. "Getting paid for writing them is even more fun."

"Absolutely!" he laughed a hearty, wholesome laugh. "Well, getting paid for them has been a problem for me at times. At least I don't have that problem now, with Marvel. Marvel cuts the checks right away."

"Very good, but still you also have Rebel Studios going on. How's things over there?"

"Rebel Studios is..." Quinn announced loudly, "and Tim (Vigil) and I are proud of this, that Rebel has not suffered through the huge, expanding universe explosion this summer. I don't know what to call it... the glut... the..."

"It's been called many things."

"Yes. Well, "Quinn surmised, "you don't have to be a marketing genius to figure out that if the stores keep ordering a higher volume of product each week then eventually the fans just can't absorb it all. So, we were pretty careful. As you know, with Rebel, we have the mainstay book, *Faust*, which we keep continuously in print like Dave Sim does *Cerebus*. We're surprised actually at how often Faust has to go back to print. *Faust, Act Ten*, is getting ready to ship and it's called the 'Walpurgisnacht Nails'."

"'Walpurgisnacht Nails'?" I asked, just wanting to know the feel of the word on my palette.

"'Walpurgisnacht Nails'," he re-affirmed me. "As usual, we attempt to fu-- your mind just a little bit harder while at the same time creating something beautiful yet painful."

"Faust does that in every issue."

"We're proud of it. People always go, 'AAAH!' when I tell them *Faust* comes out once about every nine months, but that's really a full time job, plus we do other stuff, too. We handle production, promotion, distribution and you have to talk to stores and your printer. Tim handles stores and stuff out on his side of the country and it's really tough -- plus he's still doing album covers and stuff, too."

"And you guys have other projects..."

"Yes. Rebel has grown very slowly but I think that was a smart move. Tim and I have followed with other stories that I wanted to do like the *Nightvision* series that I do with Hannibal King and *Eo* that Tim does with Franz Henkel. So, we've got other things that we're burning to do but time is a limited thing. *Nightvision* is a four issue miniseries this year and there will be one of those out in the summer and one in the fall. *Eo* will be annual. This summer we're launching *Gunfighters In Hell* by Joe Vigil and that will be a special edition followed by a regular edition a couple months later.

"Just because you might be seeing more David Quinn writing out there than you've been seeing in the past with things like *Cain* coming out from Harris and now *Dr. Strange* from Marvel and apparently some of the Tundra material and DC material that was written years ago is 'in danger' of coming out, you might think for some reason that Rebel is gone. No. That's not the case. Rebel Studios is plugging away."

"Very good."

PREVIEW

GEN 13

by Brandon Choi, J. Scott Campbell and Alex Garner
Published by Image Comics

MAGIC
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Arabian Nights™

The hot breeze off the desert welcomes you to the land of palm trees and oases. The desert nomads tend to their camels as you stare at the brass lamp in your hands, hoping the fabled djinn can help you get out of your current predicament. Welcome to the world of *Arabian Nights*.

Arabian Nights is an expansion for **Magic: The Gathering**—70 brand new cards to add to your **Magic: The Gathering** decks. Sold in booster packs of 8 cards, *Arabian Nights* cards will not stand on their own; you must own a copy of **Magic: The Gathering** to play! Everything from flying carpets to the giant Dandan await you. So throw a touch of the desert into your **Magic: The Gathering** game and be the first in your gaming group to unleash the fierce Nomad Raiders on your unsuspecting foe.

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Are comic books too Violent?

By Dwayne Haddix

As the American public begins to scrutinize television and movies for their excess violence, comic books have also come under fire.

Now, I will be the first to say comics are of a violent nature with heroes fighting villains, but let us take a look at other examples such as several great novels of old like *Last of the Mohicans* and *The Three Musketeers*. In my humble opinion, the real issue here is what people in today's world think is violent. Is punching the bad guy in the face okay or would today's hip crowd want the hero to shoot the villain in the face? When you get right down to it, violence is violence, be it a punch in the nose or a shotgun blast to the chest. Americans are growing up thinking the only way to solve a problem is with your fists.

David Altaner, who wrote an article for the *Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel* on comic book violence, made it a point to tell all his readers about his "concern with superhero names like Deadpool, Deathblow, Bloodseed and War Man." I admit those names may not sound all that "heroic" but he failed to mention heroes with names like Valor, Captain America, Superman, and even Excalibur. These names mean something to many people, they're names of true heroes struggling to achieve heroic outcomes. Mr. Altaner also pointed out that one of the "Supermen" cripples criminals but again he failed to mention that this man, or any of the other Supermen, were not the one, true SUPERMAN! The real Superman came back and brought the villain, as he always has, to justice.

On behalf of Image Comics, they are not the "monsters" they were made out to be in this article. These guys have done something no one else has done. They left Marvel Comics at the height of their careers, successfully marketed themselves and united to form the most successful company in recent years. Other than that, and seeing their own creative visions come to life (in lieu of those owned by a corporation), they are doing little different than what they did before on titles such as *Uncanny X-Men* or *Spider-Man*. They are no more "monsters" than the creators and editors at DC Comics or Marvel Comics.

I agree with Wayne Markley's comments about "comics are not always played for sensationalism" as in the case of Superman's return. For people like Gary Groth, of *Comics Journal*, who thinks "today's comics are intellectually bankrupt," there are comics out there that are critically praised such as DC's *Sandman* and Aardvark-Vanaheim's *Cerebus* and other enjoyables like Warp's *Elfquest*, Dark Horse's *Concrete*, Eclipse's *Miracleman*, Cartoon Books' *Bone*, and even Marvel's *Incredible Hulk*.

The bottom line is... comics are violent to some extent, and not for everyone, but the same goes for television, movies, fiction best sellers, and life. An interesting story can't be told without a little conflict, and that's what comics are about – interesting stories, struggling heroes, dastardly villains, and cataclysmic conflict. People flock to strife and belligerency like flies. Others live to point out what's wrong, what's right and what should be censored but it comes down to individual choice. You pick and choose what you want to read and if you feel a comic is too violent, then don't buy it. I realize kids aren't always aware what may be socially inappropriate for their age groups so, when they can, parents should be urged to go with their child and take a look at what is being bought and help them make the choice.

I want to thank Rebekah Black of AC comics for sending a copy of David Altaner's article to us at *Arena*.

A Conversation With... Stan Woch

by Joe Martin

Joe Martin: What are you working on at the moment?

Stan Woch: Right now I'm inking *Black Orchid* for DC's Vertigo and I've also been doing a bit of work for Majestic which is a pretty new company which is a subdivison of a trading card company. Their first project was the Comics Future Stars trading card set. From there, these guys are releasing a "comic card" set based on their own characters. The first set is called *Legacy*. It's written by Fred Schiller, penciled by Dan Lawlis and I'm inking it and Paul Mounts is coloring it.

JM: Paul Mounts is very good.

SW: Yeah, he's great. His stuff looks really beautiful. Majestic is introducing their character with the comic card set and then they're going to the comic book.

JM: How far has that come along?

SW: *Legacy* #0 is done. It should be out around the end of August.

JM: You did the inks on that. Was it fun?

SW: Yeah. Dan is definitely different for this day and age as far as comics go. He's a throwback to more of a solid draftsman-type of approach to drawing as opposed to the sylized approach that is out there now. Dan really draws well. He's very solid and there's a lot of form to his work. It was definitely fun to work on.

JM: Good. It's important for an inker to work on pencils that he enjoys. I'm sure you have had some jobs that are not so fun.

SW: That happens. It's not much of a motivator.

JM: Do you prefer inking over pencilling?

SW: At this point in time, yeah, I do. I enjoyed pencilling earlier on and I did several issues of *Swamp Thing* for DC during the Alan Moore era. I did *Airboy* for a long time for Eclipse Comics. My most recent attempt at pencilling is I did an issue of *Sandman*. It was #32 or something like that. It'll be in the next *Sandman* collection reprint.

JM: I'd like to ask you a bit more about the concept of the comic card. Legacy #0 is the comic card you were telling me about?

SW: Yes. You'll buy a foil pack and it'll have nine cards in it and then you can assemble a sheet of cards and that will tell the story of *Legacy*.

JM: Do you think the comic card concept is a pretty good promotional idea?

SW: At the moment. I don't know how much longer this wedding between trading cards and comic books is going to last but for the moment it seems to have caught everybody's attention.

JM: I think it's gone farther than a lot of people would have predicted.

SW: I agree. Now *Legacy* #0 will be followed by *Legacy* #1 which is a straight comic book. I'm inking that and Tom (*Punisher 2099*) Morgan is pencilling.

JM: What direction is the book heading in or can you fill us in on the story itself?

SW: Bits and pieces of this universe are coming out with each new release. It's interesting because the whole concept behind what Majestic is doing with their series is that there was a character called the Protector who came to Earth. He basically became the hero of the planet. There were no paranormals before this guy came down. For a long time he was the only one and his origin is left specifically vague. Anyway, this guy discovers that he is dying. He does semi-regular inspections of himself and discovers that he has some malignant disease.

JM: What a bummer.

SW: Yeah, so he selects out of everyone on the planet someone to carry on in his place. He plans to bequeath his powers onto this person and therefore they can carry on the "legacy."

JM: Ah-ha!

SW: Right. So, anyway what happens during the course of the training for the Protector legacy is that this guy discovers that Legacy isn't quite up to the job. Protector has no more time left when he decides this so he determines to let random chance take over. On his deathbed he has it set up to where he will distribute his powers and abilities through television waves. Anyone who is near a television and puts their hand on it will stand a chance of getting a bit of his power. That becomes known as "the lottery." There will be something like a thousand or so winners.

JM: That's pretty original.

SW: You may be a winner and get the power but it may not manifest for several years.

JM: And this makes up Majestic's paranormal soci-

ety.

SW: Exactly. That's the basics of this whole thing.

JM: What becomes of this guy he was training?

SW: He has still gotten a large portion of the Protector's powers and abilities already. It's just the Protector realized that Legacy couldn't handle *all* of it. He's also become sort of a leader for a lot of the "lottery" winners. He's more or less heading up a group of them.

JM: Since the "lottery" was random I would suppose that some of the winners were not so good people hence super badguys?

SW: Yes.

JM: Power corrupts.

SW: Yes. Exactly. We're getting a cross-section of good and bad people ending up with the abilities and also the ability itself coming out in a manner that might turn a person one way or the other. You may be a good person but the ability you get somehow warps you into being bad. There is a character in *Legacy* #1 called Caroline that is helping people deal with the acqusition of their super powers so you find out interesting bits and pieces as you read. You find out that Caroline had become "very friendly" with the Protector so to speak before he died. They were good friends, which this is the first that I've heard of that so it even surprises me!

JM: Does Majestic have a further goal in mind?

SW: As far as?

JM: Are there other releases in the works?

SW: Oh, yeah! They want to have four titles out by the end of the year but now that I stop to think about their schedule I don't know if they'll achieve that. They'll probably get maybe two out by December. I know another book that's in the works is called *S.T.A.T....* stands for Security Through Acquired Talents, I believe. The first release will be a comic card set followed by the comics. This organization is something like a government controlled group that is employed to keep the peace now that we're having this upsurgence of people with super enhanced powers and abilities.

JM: Will all the launches be initiated by a card set?

SW: I believe so. I think the first four titles are all going to be released this way.

JM: The only other guys who have done that are Defiant with Warriors of Plasm and Larry Stroman and Todd Johnson's Tribe. It'll be interesting how many other companies pick up onto this concept.

SW: For the past year or so it seems like it's becoming commonplace for a card company to associate itself with comics in some way. This is definitely a new approach to it all.

JM: Is there anything else of interest that you'd like to "throw into the wind" concerning your comic book work?

SW: I'm having a lot of fun with *Black Orchid*. It just came out this month and it's by Dick Foreman, who some people may not be too familiar with. Alan Moore brought Jamie Delano over and now Delano has brought Foreman over. He's English. He's written a couple of *Swamp Thing's* previous to this. Jill Thompson is pencilling it. And, of course, I'm inking. I'm signed on for eight issues. Beyond that, I'm not sure.

Jerry Smith's Top Ten Movies

What are the best movies made since I've been old enough to appreciate going to the movies? Being a writing sort, I came up with a list of my favorite movies of the '70s, '80s, and '90s. See if you agree entirely or have different favorites in mind. In no particular order, here are:

The Top 10 Movies of the '70s, '80s, and '90s

Star Wars

Witness

Die Hard

Fright Night

Raiders of the Lost Ark

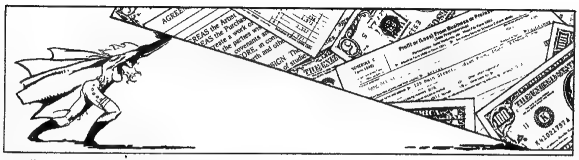
Star Trek II

Jaws

Dirty Harry

Dances With Wolves

Aliens



Getting into The BUSINESS Of Comics

by Lurene Haines

Part 8: You Got The Job - Keeping Your Humility, Pursuing More Work, and Fans

Last installment I gave you a brief overview of some of the more important legal aspects and business practices in the comic industry. This month we'll look at different considerations you must face once you've finally secured that seemingly elusive job.

It is important as both a comic professional and a business person to remember that there is more to getting work than just being offered a job. Even in the simplest of businesses, an employee or worker - whether salaried staff or subcontractor - is expected to maintain certain business practices and behaviors to keep that job. In that respect, the comic industry is no different from any other business. There are a variety of tasks and skills that are almost mandatory to continued success as a freelancer. Some of these skills include social and business interactions with peers and employers, the methods to follow for securing more work, and the behaviors expected of you when dealing with customers and fans.

Keeping Your Humility

All newcomers must consider the concept of 'keeping your humility'. There are a great variety of attitudes about this subject. Three common stances are the "I'll *never* forget where *I* came from," school of thought, the "I hope I have a chance to reach that pinnacle someday - then I'll deal with it," perspective, and the "At last they all see just how truly great/talented I am," point of view. Here are some important points to remember when considering this issue:

- whatever your work skills, there will always be somebody out there who admires your work - even if it's just your friends or family - so admirers don't always equal great talent
- if you attend conventions as a professional, there will always be fans. Some of them may claim to love your work without ever having seen it. Some will be legitimate hard-core fans who've stumbled on your work and admire the burgeoning talent they see
- most professionals will be unfamiliar with your work until you're a bit more established, but that doesn't negate the quality or value of what you produce. Low recognition is just due to your lack of exposure and the volume of product produced by the industry
- whatever your personality type - introverted vs. extroverted - there are many ways of dealing with success that are polite and considerate. And humble.
- humility is a consideration for every individual that works in any public forum . Nobody likes an arrogant, self-involved butt-head!

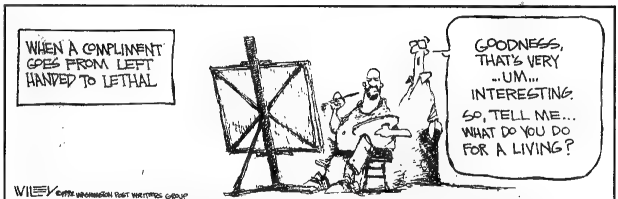
The most important thing to keep in mind about your success is that you were an industry 'nobody' until you got your first job, and if you don't work hard at being a pleasant business person, you can go right back to being a 'nobody' just as quickly if publishers refuse to hire you. The true "legends" of the comic industry are few and far betwee-, however there are plenty of transient "stars." Some are still around because they work hard and are good to their fans. Some of them are still around because they minimize contact with the fans (eliminating the 'alienate your readership' factor) and rely heavily on old friends in the industry to get work. And some are simply no longer around.

Here are a few guidelines to help you in keeping your humility:

- *Don't forget the people who helped*

you get your "break." If you're fortunate enough to have family or friends who helped you get where you are, don't forget them once you get there. Sometimes help takes the form of parents or spouses willing to support you while you struggle to get established. Sometimes the help takes the form of financial assistance. Sometimes, guidance and advice from established pros will help you get your foot in the door. Once you're through the door, don't forget how you got there!

- *No matter how popular you get, just remember that you wouldn't be there if not for the publishers and the fans.* The fans are technically your employers, too. If they don't buy the books, the publisher can't print them. Think of the publisher and the fans as a business partnership. Make sure you treat your bosses respectfully and with consideration.
- *There's always room for improvement.* Nobody is so good that they can't get better. Sometimes getting better means changing with the times. Sometimes it means keeping up with technology. Sometimes it just means growing and learning as an artist or writer. Just remember, who you are when you start out will not remain the same. The industry will affect you, and hopefully you will affect the industry. Given that you should always be changing and improving, it shouldn't be too hard to stay humble. Nothing is more humbling than learning that you don't know everything!
- *Just because you're great doesn't mean you'll get the job - and just because you got the job doesn't mean you're great.* There are many talented creators out there, all of them vying for the jobs available in the industry. Sometimes the work will go to a creator who doesn't seem to be as talented, qualified or experienced. Just remember, jobs aren't doled out based on talent alone. There are a multitude of other influential factors, including your work relationship with the publisher (established or new), your proven track record (can deliver quality on time or untried or proven failure to meet deadlines), ability to work out business details (acceptance of deadlines or financial compensation), and timing (if you were in the right place at the right time.) Keep in mind all these factors, and you'll increase the odds of securing that job. Forget them, and you may find yourself nursing a wounded ego!
- *Just because your peers ask your opinion doesn't qualify you to be patronizing.* Hopefully you will have peers with whom you


WHEN A COMPLIMENT GOES FROM LEFT HANDED TO LETHAL
GOODNESS, THAT'S VERY ..UM... INTERESTING. SO, TELL ME... WHAT DO YOU DO FOR A LIVING?
WILEY

A humorous example of how Keeping Your Humility can help you handle any situation - including critiques of your work.

Courtesy Washington Post Writers Group © 1992

Not-So-Nice Guys Finish Last

or How To Break The Rules And Fall Behind: A True Story

To illustrate some of the mistakes you should avoid once you get the job, here is a true, personal, anecdote about a newcomer who made a lot of the classic mistakes.

A young fellow David and I were friends with was struggling to "break in" to the business (for the purposes of this story we'll call him "Charles"). For years David provided him with technical instruction and advice. We advised "Charles" on his portfolio, samples, provided him with contact names and information, made personal recommendations to publishers, gave him encouragement and moral support, and goaded him into attending conventions. He had trouble getting any substantial work until at last we convinced him to attend a large convention. Within a couple of hours of introducing him around to major publishers, to whom he showed his samples, he had secured a job so prestigious that long time established professionals were effectively green with envy. We were delighted, as all "Charles" hard work was now beginning to pay off. Or at least, so we thought. It was then "Charles" began to break some very important rules that ultimately affected his career.

Once "Charles" began work on the job, he started to have artistic differences with his editor. Rather than bite his tongue and struggle along, recognizing that he was getting a tremendous opportunity for a newcomer, he broke the first golden rule; *Keep your humility.* "Charles" began to argue with his editor safe in the belief that he must be an invaluable and irreplaceable talent, because of how quickly and enthusiastically he had secured this prestigious job. In short order his working relationship with his editor and the other creators on the project began to deteriorate. As his satisfaction with the work and relationships began to wane he broke the second golden rule; *Don't be late on your deadlines - especially if you're a newcomer!* "Charles" editor became so frustrated and dissatisfied with his inability to meet the crucial deadlines, that "Charles" was fired before the completion of the project.

Once "Charles" had lost this big job, and his lucrative source of income was gone, he was back to struggling along with small potatoe jobs. He befriended another creator with whom he shared a good relationship. Riding that other creator's popularity, "Charles" was able to secure another great job with a different publisher. About this time, "Charles" broke another golden rule; *Don't forget the people who helped you get your "break."* Without any apparent reason, "Charles" simply stopped staying in touch, phoning, and visiting with us - even when in town to see his family. Quite simply, he became rude and inconsiderate. We had gone out of our way to help him get his start, and then were snubbed once he believed himself to be firmly established, and no longer needing our assistance. Needless to say we were far from motivated into helping him now that he was having problems again. Not only had he forfeited our friendship, but he'd failed to prove himself a competent professional. Very sad.

"Charles" attempted to use his new job to reestablish himself. But developed the same deadline problems he had with his first big project. As a result, he now struggles to secure himself big jobs. He picks up the occasional small project, but few publishers are interested in taking a gamble on his ability to make deadlines.

"Charles" is a nice guy. He's pleasant to talk to, and doesn't come across as arrogant or rude. It's probably that in combination with his creative talents that have continued to gain him piece work, and keep him in the business. But as long as "Charles" is unable to meet his deadlines, or operate from a more humble, fair-minded, flexible position he will find it hard to get the "big" jobs in the industry. And as long as he ignores the hand of friendship, there will be nobody there to help along his rocky career path.

♦

will interact in the business (other artists or writers.) There will be occasions where your opinion of their work will be solicited. As suggested in Parts Three and Six (Feedback and Critiques) of this series, a critique should be constructive, not destructive. Always imagine yourself on the receiving end of your comments, and temper them with humility. Regardless of how skilled you believe yourself to be compared to your peers, don't patronize, be supportive and positive. It's much more effective!

- *Don't trash other creators' work to your editor.* Whether or not you believe all other creators working for your editor are talentless trash, don't bother sharing that little insight with your boss. It's an insult to their judgement, it illustrates how arrogant you are, and ultimately will jeopardize your working relationship with that publisher. Thanks to word of mouth, it may also cause your reputation egregious harm in the industry and possibly endanger your chances of securing work with other publishers.

Keep these bits of advice in mind while you look for work throughout your career, and you'll find that publishers will begin to search you out, because in addition to your professionalism you will be considered a nice guy to deal with. To paraphrase Shakespeare, "Nothing so becomes a man as humility."

Pursuing More Work

So now you've worked on your first project. You're elated to have secured work you've always dreamed about. Now you can sit back and relax as a comic professional. ***BZZZT!*** Wrong!! Your hard work is just beginning.

Unless you've managed to secure a long term contract with a publisher to produce a regular unlimited series, there's little likelihood that your first big break is going to guarantee you a continuous flow of work. Long established freelancers and newcomers alike must constantly work at lining up new projects to produce a steady source of income. This is not easy work, and requires diligence and a tough skin. There are lots of times you will be turned away, just like any unproven newcomer, whatever the amount

Conventions

Comic conventions are an invaluable tool for securing work in the comic industry. There are a huge number of conventions held throughout the year, in all areas of the country. Conventions range widely in size, from the smaller, more intimate variety to the more elaborate, widely attended types.

Comic conventions offer a range of features, including the presence of other comic professionals (writers, artists, editors, publishers, and production people) and professionals from many related fields (trading cards, merchandise, film, TV, animation, and the literary market.) Many conventions also feature a variety of programming which can be both informative and useful. Panel discussions, art shows, auctions, portfolio reviews and instructional talks are frequently available and worth investigating.

A convention also provides a valuable source of social interaction within the industry. Conventions offer an opportunity for freelancers to renew old ties and make new acquaintances. It also provides an opportunity for editors and publishers to get to know their freelancers on a more personal, friendly level.

Conventions are also a great place to stay in touch with your readers.

Many of the more prominent conventions advertise in one or more of the industry trade journals. Your local comic shop can also provide convention information. Look for advertising in any of these publications:

- The Comic Buyers Guide
- Hero Illustrated Magazine
- Wizard Magazine
- Comic Scene
- The Comic's Journal
- Arena Magazine

Examples of some advertising for some of the better known conventions.

of experience you've acquired. As I mentioned previously, timing plays a significant role in finding work - being the right person in the right place at the right time. There are several tactics you can use to pursue more work, and for the most part they resemble those used to get the work in the first place. Here's a run down of some of the more helpful methods of lining up more work.

Conventions

Never underestimate the power of a convention. Once you've been published, this provides you with a forum from which to display your newly published samples. Both fans and publishers alike will be interested in seeing your work. Everyone likes to know a potential hot property before they were 'anyone'. Take the opportunities a convention offers to reintroduce yourself to editors and publishers you've previously met, and to make as many new contacts as possible.

Also, invest time in getting to know your freelance peers. They may have a project they're involved with that needs someone just like you. Or perhaps they know an editor who's desperately seeking talents you have to offer. Make use of the social relationships to get the word out that you're available and looking for work - it really can make a difference.

A convention will provide you with many possible work contacts. Take advantage of these events whenever your time and finances will allow it.

Mail and Telephone Contact

Just because you've now been published, don't mean you should stop sending out mail samples to publishers with whom you'd like to work. The same holds true for telephone contact. If you've established a good, friendly rapport with an editor, don't hesitate to give them a call occasionally to let them know you're available and looking for work. Sometimes, if your timing is good, you'll land yourself an unexpected, but very welcome, job.

Also, once you have acquired new, published tear sheets, renew your mail contacts with this updated material. Editors frequently feel more secure in hiring a proven quantity than a newcomer. Enclose a cover letter briefly describing your published work, and relating how you enjoyed the project and are ready for new jobs. Make sure you include a reference to past sample submissions. Don't assume every editor will remember your last sample pack.

Company Contact Information

Here are a partial listing of some of the better known comic companies. If you wish to send a submission, contact the company, using an S.A.S.E., and request a copy of their submission guidelines. Keep this listing as a reference in your business files.

Archie Comic Publications
325 Fayette Ave.,
Mamaroneck, NY 10543
(914) 381-5155

Caliber Press/Stabur Graphics
11904 Farmington Rd.,
Livonia, MI 48150
(313) 425-7930

Cry For Dawn Productions
360-A West Merrick Rd.,#350
Valley Stream, NY 11580
(516) 285-7987

DC Comics, Inc.
1325 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10019
(212) 636-5400

Dark Horse Comics
10956 SE Main St.,
Milwaukie, OR 97222
(503) 652-8815

Disney Comics
500 S. Buena Vista St.,
Burbank, CA 91521
(818) 567-5739

Eclipse Enterprises
P.O. Box 1099
Forestville, CA 95436
(707) 887-1521

Fantagraphic Books
7563 Lake City Way
Seattle, WA 98155
(206) 524-1967

Harris Publications
1115 Broadway, 8th Floor
New York, NY 10010
(212) 807-7100

Harvey Comics Entertainment
100 Wilshire Blvd.,
Santa Monica, CA 91401
(310) 451-3377

Innovation
3622 Jacob St.,
Wheeling, WVa 26003
(304) 232-7703

Kitchen Sink Press
320 Riverside Drv.,
Northampton, Ma 01060
(413) 586-9525

Malibu Entertainment
5321 Sterling Center Drv.,
Westlake Village, CA 9136
(818) 889-9800

Marvel/Epic
387 Park Ave. S.,
New York, NY 10016
(212) 696-0808

Mirage Publishing
16 Market St.,
Northampton, MA 01060
(413) 586-7066

Now Comics
60 Revere Drv.,
Northbrook, IL 60062
(708) 205-2950

Topps Comics, Inc.
254 36th St.,
Brooklyn, NY 11232
(718) 768-8900

Voyager Comm./Valiant
275 Seventh Ave., 14th Floor
New York, NY 10001
(212) 366-4900

It's highly unlikely, so be considerate and provide a friendly, yet businesslike, reminder in your note.

Mail and telephone contact should be a path a new freelancer regularly uses in securing more work. Prove your professionalism and reliability with this method, and you may find yourself with more job offers than you can possibly accept.

Personal Interviews

As I've mentioned in the past, this avenue of securing work is not always the most efficient or desirable. However, if you live in a location that easily enables you to drop by the publishers offices, take advantage of the opportunity on occasion. Make an appointment, and stop by with your newly published material. Also remember to bring any other new samples you may have produced.

Remember, the editor doesn't want to see you every couple of weeks. Save the appointments for times when you have something really big, or extra-special to show as samples. Maximize the time made available to you, or you'll begin to find that the editor is never available when you call.

Related Work Fields

Now that you've finally had a chance to work in the comic industry, you may decide that it's not quite what you thought it was

cracked up to be. If that's the case, you may want to consider related fields. Your local library or bookstore will carry copies of *Writer's Market* and *Artist's Market.* These books carry comprehensive listings of markets interested in freelancers. There are both mainstream and small press listings, including comic listings. For example, you may find that although you thought you'd enjoy drawing a superhero comic, once you completed issue two of Super-Colossal-Hero-Guy, you were quite sick of muscular men in tights and the thought of drawing editorial caricatures is much more exciting. In that case, it's off to *Artist's Mar*ket with you. There you'll find listings for a multitude of publications that are dying to have your artistic skills provide them with heaps of editorial caricatures. These related work fields operate in a very similar manner to the comic industry. You probably can use similar techniques for securing work.

Always remember this; if you're doing work you don't enjoy, it can't possibly be your best. Find the niche that makes you happiest, and pursue it for all you're worth!

Fans

Fans are wonderful. They are also one of the most complicated, exciting, gratifying and frightening things you will ever have to deal with as a comic professional. They're people. All sorts of people from all walks of life. And they love comics (or comic-related material.) Sometimes they also love you. Sometimes they don't. They're there whether you're good or bad, talented or talentless. Trust me, they'll find you. Once you've been published there's no way of avoiding them.

Fan presence is everywhere in this industry, whether you're an extroverted convention attendee or an introverted hermit. Fans come to conventions, they show up at store signings and they send you mail. They're Joe Average on the street who finds out you're a professional artist/writer. Everyone has some creative streak in them, and the idea that an individual makes a living with their creativity is very exciting and seductive. Everyone knows somebody who's creative, and they'll want to tell you all about them. Be polite. Listen. Then excuse yourself when you must get going. Always keep in mind that you're no better than any fan you meet just because you are a published talent. There are plenty of doctors and lawyers and musicians and rocket scientists who are fans. Chances are quite good you'd admire their work too, if you knew anything about it.

Here are some pointers on what to expect from fans and how to deal with them.

Good Stuff About Some Fans

- no matter how bad your day, week, month or life is going, they can make you feel like you're on top of the world
- they love what you do, and they're generally not afraid to tell you
- they say nice things
- they bring you gifts to show their appreciation of you
- they buy your work, which makes publishers want to hire you for more projects
- they are interested enough in your work to buy original art and commission new work - a great supplement to the freelancer pay
- you get to meet a lot of really nice, interesting people - some of whom you'll become good friends with

Bad Stuff About Some Fans

- they really can't stand your work and aren't afraid to tell you why
- they can say some really thoughtless and mean things
- even if you cut your price on originals or offer deals on commissions, they'll balk at your price, or act outraged by what you're asking
- sometimes they're not the most socially skilled individuals, and they won't leave you alone

Dealing With Fans

This is a complicated issue, because of the diversity of the fandom. There are, however ,some basic 'rules' you can follow. Interestingly enough, they're also basic common sense, courtesy behaviors. Feel free to apply them to other people in your life.

Always remember this; no matter how much you admire a particular publisher or retail operation, always, always, always remember that the fans are technically your employers.

Although they don't make out the pay cheque, they buy the product. If the fans don't like you, they don't buy the product, and sales will drop. Editors don't hire creators whose work makes sales of the book drop.

Here's how you should treat fans: Be Nice. Think of it as a customer satisfaction job. You keep the customer happy, they keep coming back for more. Sure the guy with the bad body odor, who spits when he talks, is grossing you out. But he buys your book, so Be Nice. For every fan who puts you off, there are twice as many nice fans in the wings. So Be Nice. The bad ones are only more noticeable because of their negative qualities. Trust me, there's way more nice fans out there than rotten ones. So Be Nice. Besides, they can't be all bad. They bought your book, didn't they? In case you didn't take my point, let me clarify: Be Nice, Be Nice, Be Nice.

On the flip side of this coin, are the fans who go out of their way to make it impossible to Be Nice. Rude fans, people who say mean things about your work or your current project, people who make unreasonable demands and then act like they hate you when you refuse, fans who obviously don't care a lick about your work, just it's collectability (IE., they haven't even opened the book let alone read it), etc., etc. If a fan makes it impossible to be nice, be as tactful as possible. If that doesn't work, just ignore them altogether. Mostly they'll get bored by your lack of response and leave. Minimize the conflict - it's the best P.R. you can do for your career. Plus, the nice fans will remember what a considerate guy you were. And most likely, if there are any nice fans around, they will be quick to jump to your defense. Remember, they're Nice.

If all else fails, remove yourself from the vicinity completely. Why make an ugly scene? The Nice fans will only remember you losing your cool - not the idiot who provoked you.

Most important, remember that the good and bad aspects of fans are the same characteristics you'll find anywhere in the world, no matter what your job might be. There are nice guys out there, and there are jerks. Consider it one of your most valuable skills as a freelancer, to be a diplomat. It can only help your career.

A Special Note on Fans

At the risk of sounding melodramatic, there are a few types of fans you must be aware of in order to protect yourself. Being a 'public' figure brings some risks. There are obsessive fans who will attach themselves to you because of your perceived 'celebrity'. There are fans who resent your popularity and will try to do nasty (and sometimes dangerous) things to you. There are fans who will come on to you sexually, purely because of your public status. A word of warning about these fans: They can endanger your career, and even your life. Play it cool, be polite, and keep your eyes open. You have a responsibility to protect yourself, foremost. Don't ever underestimate your fans.

The Big Picture

This time around we've looked at a few important considerations to keep in mind once you've secured your first comic industry work. I outlined reasons why *keeping your humility* is crucial, both from a social and career standpoint. I also emphasized the importance of *pursing more work*, using basic methods I described previously for securing work. These included *conventions, mail and telephone contact, personal interviews*, and *related work fields*. I also explained some things a newcomer can expect from *fans*, and the best way of dealing with some fan situations.

Next issue we will look at You Got The Job: How To Be A Good Businessman. I will review some of the most important business procedures and responsibilities a freelancer must follow to be a continuing success. Until then, just remember, just because you've got the job doesn't mean your work stops there. Practice the skills outlined here for being a professional, and you'll find yourself very happy Getting Into The Business Of Comics!

If you have questions about topics covered in this column, please feel free to write. I will try to address your questions in the column or by a personal note. Send your letters to **Lurene Haines, c/o Arena Magazine, 264 main St., Florence, KY 41042.**

The Mailroom: Submissions Guidelines

Welcome to another installment of The Mailroom where we print the submissions guidelines for an individual publisher. There is in no particular order. These are current guidelines, provided by the publisher or submissions editor. Use these as a strict guide when sending samples of work to the company.

This time around we are featuring Malibu Entertainment. Although they started out as one of the smaller independents, Malibu has come a long way and is now considered one of the big contenders in the market. Their Submissions Guidelines are concise.

Submission Guidelines

ALL SUBMISSIONS:
• Address all submissions to:

Submissions Editor
Malibu Comics Entertainment, Inc.
5321 Sterling Center Drive
Westlake Village, CA 91361-4613

• A self addressed stamped envelope is necessary for a response. (Outside U.S., enclose international reply coupons). We do not respond to submissions without a S.A.S.E.
• Please make sure your name and address are on every page of your submission.
• No phone calls please.
• If you would like your entire submission returned you must enclose an envelope large enough and sufficient postage or your submission will be regrettably discarded.
• Please allow 10 weeks for response.
• See the enclosed Q & A sheet for answers to the most common questions about submissions.

FOR WRITERS:
• All proposals should be no longer than five pages.
• Proposals should be typewritten and double-spaced on 8 1/2" X 11" paper.
• You may submit a comic script involving pre-existing characters or ones that you have created, but most often our writers are given assignments based on their ability to tell a story in comic book format rather than the specific characters which they may have created or written about.
• New project proposals should include an outline of the series and a brief description of the characters and plot for subsequent issues, as well as the estimated number of issues of the project. Please include samples of any artwork that has been created for the project.

FOR ARTISTS (PENCILLERS, INKERS, LETTERERS AND COLORISTS):
• Please send photocopies of original illustrations. NEVER send originals.
• Include at least one multiple-panel story page and one splash page for consideration.
• Inkers should enclose a pencilled copy of the artwork they have inked.
• Colorists/painters should enclose printed samples of their work, color photocopies or 3X5 prints. Please no slides or transparencies because they are difficult to evaluate.
• Letterers, please only send samples of comic book style lettering (dialogue, italic, bold, sound effects etc.). Do not send samples of any other type of lettering because it cannot show us how you would letter in a comic book format. For examples of comic book lettering please look at some of our comics.

Answers to most-asked Malibu submission questions.

Q. How can I apply for a job as a staff artist or writer at Malibu Comics Entertainment, Inc.?
A. We do not employ any staff artists or writers. All of the art you see in our comics is done by freelance artists working all around the world through the mail only. The only way to get an assignment from Malibu is through mailed submissions.

Q. Can I come to your office and show you my portfolio?
A. Due to the very large volume of requests that Malibu gets we regret that we cannot individually view portfolios. Only mailed submissions are acceptable.

Q. I've heard that submissions are generally handled with more priority if they are addressed to a specific person. Who should I address it to?
A. All submissions should be addressed to the **Submissions Editor**. There is no trick for getting priority.

Q. Should I call to verify that my submission was received or to check on its progress?
A. Please do not call to check on your submission. Regrettably, due to the large volume of submissions we cannot handle any submission business over the phone. Be sure to precisely follow the submission guidelines when sending your submission and you should receive a reply within 10 weeks. You are always welcome to re-submit through the mail if you have some doubts about your original submission.

Q. Do you actually look at every submission you get?
A. Yes. We open and individually evaluate every submission that we receive. We also respond to every submission that includes a S.A.S.E. Unfortunately, due to the large volume we often use a form letter rather than a personal critique or response.

Q. What are you looking for in a submission?
A. We are not usually looking for anything other than quality and relevance to comics. You may send a masterpiece painting in for an assignment as an inker but this will not show us your skill as a comic book inker. You may send us a prize winning short story to show us that you are a great writer, but that does not show us how you would handle a comic script. On the other hand you may send us a great piece of art but we may not have any assignments open for three months or more. We will send you a letter saying that we are keeping your work on file if this is the case. Always feel free to resubmit every six months to keep us up to date.

Q. Do you have any samples of work that you can send me to give me an idea of what you are looking for?
A. We recommend that you study the comics we publish, which are available at your local comic store (check the yellow pages). You may also order comics direct from us. Please call or write for a free catalog. We publish comics in many different genres and are therefore not looking for any certain style. Just quality.

Q. Realistically, what percentage of submissions actually lead to assignments?
A. About 1%. As in any business, there are always more freelancers who want work than there is work available.

Q. Where can I get copyright information?
A. We suggest that you call the U.S. Copyright office in Washington D.C. at (202) 707-3000. The *Writer's Market* and *Artist's Market* (listed on the recommended reading list below) also have basic copyright information.

Lastly, please don't be discouraged if Malibu Comics cannot use your work at this time. Keep working and submitting. Try other publishers. Feel free to resubmit to us every six months to keep us up to date on your work. Remember, creators are the fuel of the comics industry.

RECOMMENDED READING

Comics And Sequential Art
By: Will Eisner
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Brit Bits

Dick Foreman and other UK creators talk!

by Paul Birch

To U.S. comic readers Northampton means Turtles, Tundra and the newly adopted home of Kitchen Sink, to us in the UK it's the birth place of Alan Moore and Jamie Delano, and for some years the place Dick Foreman has rested his head at night.

Mr. Foreman's CV is brief but impressive: 2 episodes of "On Earth, as it is" in *Blaam!*, a "Future Shock" for *2000AD*, *Hellblazer #32*, a couple of issues for *Swamp Thing*, "The Janitor" strip in *Miracleman: The Apocrypha #2*, and now his first ongoing series, *Black Orchid*.

"Tom Peyer (editor) invited me to do a proposal," Dick explained. "It was my brief to use the Gaiman/McKean mini-series as a basis and not make any immediate changes, which I was absolutely happy with because there was so much in that story that still demanded explanation. When Neil proposed the idea he probably had visions of making it a continuing series and was possibly setting up some things. and as such it was a gift, because it had all those threads but I didn't have any stipulations about exactly where they should lead. That gave me a good jumping-on point.

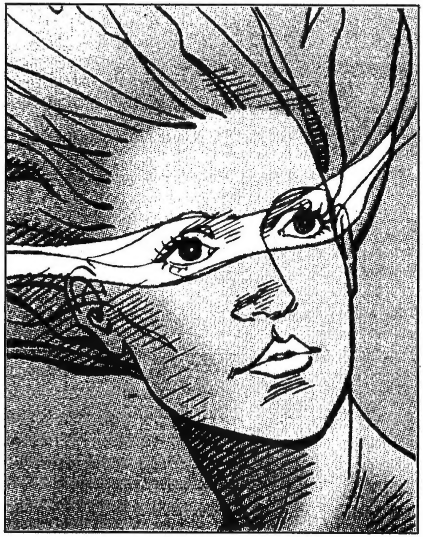
"Over the first twelve issues it's a story of her being on the run from Logos; travelling south through America and heading back to Brazil. That gives us room for one issue stories in different locations before we bring the plot threads back together. We find more about her through the characters who accompany her, or meet her at various stages.

"About #4 we learn more about Suzie, and why Black Orchid's no longer with her. Suzie's whereabouts are revealed in the *Black Orchid Annual* – this really starts to build up the Black Orchid mythos and associated beings, which I think might have been hinted at in the mini-series.

"I'm very pleased with what Jill Thompson's achieved," he says of the artwork. As previously mentioned in "Brit Bits," Paul Johnson is to illustrate the twelve issue long *The Rites of Alchemy* written by Dick for an unscheduled '94 release.

"It's an attempt to actually define alchemy a bit more deeply than it most frequently is in fantasy stories," the writer explains. "You get a lot of stories where in a list of magical attributes somebody s called an alchemist, but you very rarely find out what being an alchemist actually is, or what alchemy's about.

"It was also an attempt to set



Next Issue!

ARENA MAGAZINE

#15

Erik Larsen

Be There!

up a character, and do so in a story where it took quite a bit of time for him to become indoctrinated in the whys and wherefores of alchemy, rather than as in the case of Dr. Strange where in one story he's met the Ancient One and achieved enlightenment; but to do something where the journey -- not necessarily to total enlightenment -- but to some kind of insight is an arduous one.

"It's set against the backdrop of an odd sort of apocalyptic adventure yarn where these mad immortal alchemists are plotting to transmute the entire world in order to get themselves off the planet, and basically he finds himself up against these people." As if all this isn't enough, Dick's also developing another mini-series for DC's Vertigo imprint with John McCrae.

By the time you read this it's likely that John Erasmus will have finished his full-art duties on the Marvel Epic Heavy Hitter series *Terraists*, written by Pat Mills and Tony Skinner.

"The Terraists, in each of their cases, have been close to death at some point, and rather than be allowed to die, the Earth, deciding she needs heroes, imbrued them with her life-force," John revealed. "A government agency is formed and these people are absorbed into it so that the government can continue things like mining, but when the heroes find out they're being used they rebel against the system.

"It's kind of Moonraker-ish in a way but with a twist to it. It's nice and refreshing and I'm getting good feedback from the editor."

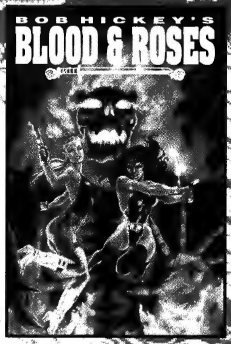
Dark Horse recently contacted John about work on their World's Greatest Heroes titles, which he may do after *Terraists*, and he'll be finishing off *Spring Heeled Jack* as a one-shot book for Blackbird co-written with somebody called Birch, Blackbird may also be publishing John's solo extravaganza *Dervish Ropey*.

Stewart (Staz) Johnson who's currently inking and coloring another "Harlem's Heroes" series over Kev Hopgood's pencils for *2000AD*, tells me he'll be returning to work for Marvel UK, as penciller on a new series, while Spanish artist Sal Larroca has taken over as the regular artist on *Death's Head*, with Liam Sharp set to return for an as yet unscheduled 2-issue story-arc. Two issues is also what you'll get from Simon Furman and Paco Diaz in *Death Metal Vs. Genetix* which commences shipping in October alongside the 4-issue *Timestryke* series from Barrie Mitchell and Graham Marks.

Marvel UK editor Alan Cowsill recently phoned to tell me of a change of plan on the Red Mist 20/20 series whereby Andrew Currie will now only be drawing *Roid Rage*, thus allowing him at least one night's sleep a week. The slack's taken up by Charlie Adlard on *Blood Rush* and Joe Fonteriz on *Death Duty*, which'll be ongoing.

Alan passed the phone along to David Leach who's now working in-house there, and after making the usual insults to each other, and inquiring how his delightful spouse was still putting up with him, he let me know that he, along with his former *Toxic Crusaders* co-writer Jeremy Banx are working on *Warhide* due in November. To quote the Leach-ish one "It's set around the collapse of the Soviet Union and features a Russian superhero who's a skinless man! It's weird and extremely disgusting!" Of that I've no doubt! 'Til next month.

SKY COMICS DECEMBER RELEASES



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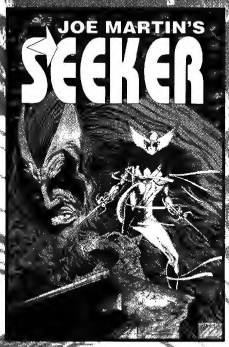

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